

# The Review of Metaphysics

## A PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

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# The Review of Metaphysics

A Philosophical Quarterly

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# THE REVIEW OF METAPHYSICS

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## THE DIMENSIONS OF MORALITY

There has been an increasing tendency in the recent literature of philosophy to emphasize anew the fact that man, as he exhibits himself in his moral behavior, is a multi-dimensional creature. This is a valuable reminder, even though it distress us through the complexity it reveals. Ethical discussion has for some years been closely concerned with linguistic analysis, and largely committed to an emotive and positivistic view. This has had certain advantages; but it has also, and especially latterly, issued in a dogmatic scepticism that has first confined inquiry to the search for some least common denominator of the moral life, and has then confined this search itself to the linguistic surface of the moral act. So it is well that we should now forcibly recall our attention to the depth and range of the moral consciousness, and should resolve to take this, at least provisionally, with the seriousness it demands for itself.

When we do this — when we postpone judgment on the meaningfulness and validity of moral experience until this has had the opportunity to speak its piece — at what sort of conception of man's moral condition do we arrive? This is the sole question that the present study will seek to clarify. I shall not be concerned to scrutinize the credentials of the moral conscience: to judge, as among the phenomena of pleasure-seeking, expediency, preference, obligation, devotion to duty, responsibility, self-sacrifice, freedom and love, that some are legitimate reports of actual motives and sentiments while others are pretensions and rationalizations. To the contrary, I should

maintain that this separation of the sheep from the goats is precisely what needs to be reconsidered. Nor shall I be concerned to suggest, except perhaps by indirection, even 'the general form of ethical theory that is required if these various aspects of morality are to be synthesized and explained. My interest lies exclusively with the phenomena — *the facts apparent* and *the facts presumptive* — that moral consciousness exhibits and that moral theory must take account of. Hence, my primary intention is to elicit the full range of the moral life as this reveals itself to a purposeful and theoretically uncommitted examination of the common moral conscience. Secondly, I shall consider the implications of these moral facts as they bear on the nature of man and man's place in the universe, as well as the difficulties that these facts raise for theory.

# I

It has long been recognized that the moral character, condition, and behavior of man are all complex. The continued existence over the centuries of different and competing ethical theories, each having a high plausibility, has enforced the recognition, already evident enough in direct experience, that the moral situation in which man discovers himself appears as a compound of several factors. Unfortunately, this recognition has usually been provisional: it has been accepted tentatively only to be rejected and engulfed by some monolithic theory. Such theories follow one, or sometimes both, of two courses. They may reduce the moral complex by eliminating some of the elements that enter into it, declaring these by simple fiat to be fictitious or epiphenomenal; or they may obviate this complexity by making some one of these elements essential and then deriving the others from it. In either case, both the intention and the result are the same: a desired theoretical simplicity is achieved by the sacrifice of much of the actual richness that man encounters in moral experience.

My present intention is the reverse of this, so my results may be expected to err in the opposite direction. I accept the complexity of the moral life as given. It is my purpose to clarify



this complexity by identifying the factors that contribute to it, and by analyzing the more significant relations that hold among these factors. But this concentration upon complexity need not entail a dedication to chaos. Even a phenomenological account of the flux and welter of the moral life can exhibit system, so long as the complexity of morality derives from a systematic matrix. This, I think, is the case. There are four discernible sources of moral complexity; two of these are fundamental and important, while the other two are largely derivative. I shall discuss them in turn.

Morality is complex, in the first place, because the events with which it deals contain a human subject involved in an objective situation. It is always some man who is the moral agent, and some external state-of-affairs that confronts him with a moral choice. Moral problems arise, and men have a regard for moral values, when alternatives are open and action must be taken. Where we do not have a sense of our own agency, where our involvement is so rigid as to be constrained or so lax as to be casual, we do not feel ourselves to be engaged in a moral situation. Likewise, where we do not have a sense of the consequences we are preparing, where the results of choice appear temporary and indifferent, the moment does not have for us a moral quality. Men enter consciously into the moral order when they become aware of themselves as private agents whose decisions are publicly consequential.

The moral life is a continuing series of transactions between the subjective and the objective worlds, the out-going phase of which is reflected as will, the incoming phase as conscience. Regarded from the human perspective, these transactions are acts; and morality is the field of acts that are intended to make a difference. For such an act to be morally successful, it must be appropriate to both the human subject and the objective state-of-affairs: it must be the right act for the agent and the right act in the situation. We need not here enter into an analysis of the content of these two demands of morality; it is enough to stress that, since the act makes a difference to both, it must be adequate to both. The moral act is rooted and realized alike in its agent and its consequences: it is willed as

certain envisaged consequences; and its agent is included within the actual difference it makes.

If the moral life is to be understood, it must be considered from both of these perspectives: as equally willed and consequential. The failure to do this is responsible for much of the confusion and most of the disputes concerning moral questions. The locus of moral value is placed *either* in the satisfaction that the agent can realize from the situation or in the demands that the situation imposes upon the agent. The content of the morally right is defined *either* in terms of the attitudes and intentions of the agent or in terms of the consequences that flow from his decision. The driving force of morality is found *either* in the agent's refined pursuit of private preference or in his recognition and acceptance of a public — social, religious, or metaphysical — obligation. It is advocated that moral behavior should be controlled *either* by cultivating the character of the agent to ensure his adherence to principles or by strengthening the compulsiveness of an authority that administers detailed rules and standards. In every case, the moral problem can be resolved only if both approaches are employed and integrated. Man neither creates values *ex nihilo* nor discovers values that are pre-existent; he realizes values that are potential in his transactions with the world. Man can neither altogether assume nor altogether surrender the responsibility for his acts; these are conditioned by his own character as a living creature and by the environment in which he lives, but he authors them out of these materials. The attempt to simplify the moral problem by eliminating either the agent or the situation — the effort to reduce morality to either objective or subjective terms — must be given up in the face of the facts. For the most fundamental type of moral complexity is that resulting from the entanglement of the self and the world. Since morality issues precisely from the tension between these two factors, the attempt to resolve this tension by subordinating either of them to the other can never lead to a solution of the moral problem, but only to the denial of morality.

The second important type of complexity results from the temporal character of the moral act. Any case of real moral

involvement endures and develops in time. For man to function as a moral agent it is necessary that he envisage alternatives, explore the consequences implicit in these, measure his responsibility to the world as well as his entailment with the self, weigh the interests that are at issue and the results that are in suspense, commit himself, and act. This making of a moral decision, this resolution of a moral situation, is a process. Like any process, it passes through a series of stages or phases; and in running its course the moral process absorbs much material from outside of itself, transforms this material in different ways, and ejects from itself various by-products before reaching its proper culmination in a willed and consequential act. I cannot here explore in detail the course of this process; but the more important elements that participate in it, and the more important phases of its development, must be exhibited systematically, if briefly.

The moral process emerges out of a situation that is not itself actually moral, but is only potentially so; in this process, a moral act is forged out of material that originally is devoid of moral content. This pre-moral inception of the process can be identified loosely as the *arousal of interest*: here an act is initiated as the self becomes aware of the world's promise; this act has already been prepared at the still simpler level of organic need and instinct; and the act may be consummated at either of these levels without ever entering the moral domain. The act is performed, it obtrudes upon the public scene, it has effects. It is not moral because these effects are not transformed into consequences by being envisaged, considered, and willed. The act is simply done, rather than committed. Viewed from outside, and measured by its results, it may be judged moral or immoral. Viewed from within, it is either pre-moral or a-moral: pre-moral if of insignificant portent and so safely to be left to habit or hazard; a-moral if its significance is unrecognized and ignored. In the latter case the doer is to be blamed; but as an abnormal person rather than an immoral agent.

We return, then, to the arousal of interest as the moment of moral potentiality. But before tracing the process that actualizes morality, it is necessary to remark on an important

and often neglected character of this moment. This is the fact that the arousal of interest is already a bivalent event: not only is it the case that *I am interested in something*, but equally *something interests me*. This is completely obvious; but subjectivism has so bewitched contemporary thought that it is frequently overlooked. And it is important that it should not be overlooked. For this means that at the moment of its inception the moral process is as firmly rooted in the objective order as in the subjective. If we can remember this, then, as we watch the process unfold, we can see that it is ideally defined and actually controlled by the character of the world as much as by the character of the self. I shall have more to say on this theme later. But now, and for a second time, we return to the arousal of interest itself.

This moment is so far only morally nascent. But it does not long remain so. Interest, once aroused and unless immediately abandoned or consummated, envisages alternatives: it realizes that the present moment is heavy with different futures, that these are irreconcilable among themselves, and hence that some must be aborted in order that others may be delivered. This is to say that the concept of *interest* is a high abstraction, and that to treat it as a term having a single concrete reference is to distort the moral problem before it is even considered. *Interest* is an abstract locus that is generated by a variety of forces and so faces in a variety of directions: it comes from instinct, habit, training, association, belief, and devotion; it moves toward the satisfaction of local needs and desires, the building of a career, the furtherance of other persons and groups, the realization of principles and purposes that are regarded as independent of personal approval. In sum, interest reflects both the self and the world, and each of these is itself compound. It is just because interest contains such alternatives that the moral situation finds its resolution only through a process. The arousal of interest engenders morality when the agent becomes aware that he confronts a situation that is potent with different consequences, and that it depends upon him which of these will be actualized. With this awareness of his own agency, and of the consequential possibilities that rest with him, man is launched upon the moral process: he

realizes that he must choose and will an act. So various courses of action must be considered, as to the ends they would further, the means they would demand, and the incidental consequences they would entail. Into this consideration enter such factors as emotions, attitudes, habits, reasons, purposes, responsibilities, and ideals. Deliberation upon these constitutes the body of the moral process. Here there occur the hallowed conflicts of pleasure and duty, preference and obligation, egoism and altruism, prudence and benevolence, the want and the ought. All of these depend primarily upon the bivalence of interest, just as this depends upon the agent-situation duality. This process of moral deliberation culminates in choice and commitment: the agent wills an act and commits himself to its consequences.

Of course, it need hardly be mentioned that the moral process — here reduced to an ideal or archetypal pattern — can be interrupted and subverted at any stage of its development; this occurs when some element gains a position of dominance and subordinates the process as a whole to itself. Passion may blind us to many of the consequences at issue; habit may make us indifferent to all but a limited range of value; dogmatic standards may obliterate individual differences; a fierce allegiance to principle may entail an unwarranted sacrifice of persons. These are but conspicuous embodiments of the old adage that it is far easier to do wrong than right. Still, the moral process usually contains at least these elements and stages I have mentioned; all are integral parts and phases of it. But the constant tendency of moral theory is to select some one or few of them which, it is held, control the process as a whole. In this respect there is an apt analogy with the history of the epistemological problem. In the study of the process of inquiry, this same tendency was long dominant: some one of the elements that feed this process — sense-data, ideas, forms of thought, intuition — was regarded as basic; or some one of the procedures it employs — observation, deductive inference, postulation, verification, the test of practice — was made to constitute its essence. In our investigations of the process of inquiry and proof, a more synthetic and inclusive



attitude has been reached; in our investigations of the process of moral deliberation and commitment, it remains to be achieved.

I shall return immediately to these two principal moral threads of process and bivalence, in order to draw them more closely together. But before doing so, the moral panorama should be completed by introducing the two other complicating factors that enter into it; these are derivative, and can be discussed quite summarily. The first of these is the fact that every moral act has effects both on the agent who wills it and on other men. Hence, moral choices are always considered and evaluated from these two quite distinct points of view; and every moral act is asked to satisfy two very different criteria. Because of this, some moral theories take Happiness as their base term, others take Good or Right; and then the attempt is made to reduce one of these terms to the other. It is held that man does and should aim at happiness, and inevitably, but incidentally, produce good; or that he does and should aim at good, and inevitably, but incidentally, achieve happiness. These are cheering assumptions. But they gloss over the conflict that is at the heart of morality: that the realization of value entails the sacrifice of value. Finally, and most simply, the moral problem is complicated by the fact that practical considerations enter into it at least as largely as do theoretical ones. On the horizon of moral inquiry, results loom as prominently as truth. What will follow from certain ideas being believed becomes as important as the content of the ideas. This practical urgency presses upon all inquiry. But in morals it is a particularly disturbing factor. Continually one senses in moral studies that the author's anticipation of the consequences of his doctrine impinges upon the development of this doctrine.

I have so far been tracing two principal themes. First, that the moral field is through and through bivalent. It is defined by the agent-situation duality, the entanglement of the self and the world; the events that transpire within it are acts that are both willed and consequential. Second, that moral acts issue from a process. These acts emerge from a pre-moral background; they are prepared through the inter-play of various

organic and psychic forces: they are complete when the agent assumes responsibility for the difference that his act will make.

We can now make explicit a third principal theme that is already implicit in these two and so has been discussed by indirection. This is that the moral process exhibits development in a definite direction. In general terms, this development is toward a clarification, refinement, and synthesis of the agent-situation duality. Whether we consider the preparation of a single moral act, or the more massive process that is the formation of a moral character, we discover this movement from the chaotic involvement of the self in the world to the coherent commitment of the self to the world. The existence of moral levels, the presence within the moral process of competing forces, the fact that moral adjustment (whether of situation or character) can be reached on various planes — all of this is compulsively brought out in ordinary moral experience. And the simplest way to get a preliminary sense of this moral progression is through the familiar distinctions that common-sense draws: as here revealed, the passage is roughly from instinct, through desire, pleasure, prudence, obligation, duty, and responsibility, to love. As a particular act is performed at one or the other of these levels, and as a character operates chiefly on one or the other of these planes, so is its moral value measured. This rather vague schema must now be clarified.

The direction that moral development takes is most accurately described as the product of two factors: one of these is the broadening of the moral horizon that man envisages; the other is the increasing intimacy that man finds in his involvement with the world. For convenience's sake, let us call these respectively the principle of the extension of the moral horizon and the principle of the intension of moral commitment; I shall discuss each briefly. The operation of the first is altogether obvious. At the largely pre-moral level of instinct, nothing is involved but the relation of an immediately available external object to an actually pressing internal need. At the levels of desire and pleasure, a plurality of possible satisfactions is usually in question; man is conscious of various wants, and he must decide which he wants the most. Here, these wants (desires or

pleasures) remain local, limited, and isolated; there is little or no integration among them, and they compete on quantitative terms. At the level of prudence the horizon broadens greatly; man here attains to a grasp of himself as an integral person, and to a conception of his total best interests. There emerges what might be called *the sense of one's career*: man now seeks to pattern his life as an entity. Temporally coincident with the movement toward this plane, man achieves a realization of the ties that bind him to his fellows; through *the sense of association* he immerses himself in joint enterprises, where the welfare of others comes to mean as much as, or more than, his own. Man here breaks through the plane of expediency, which views others merely as instruments of self-interest, and emerges on the plane of duty: the world is acknowledged as commensurate with the self, and man achieves self-subordination. Once this level is reached, there are no limits to the possible extension of the moral horizon. Man can now willingly bind himself to increasingly large human groups, to abstract principles, to the total world order, or to God.

Beyond this point, moral development is intensional rather than extensional. Man, having gradually extended his realization of the context within which he lives and acts, proceeds now to envisage himself as an active participant in the concerns of this context. The distinctions that common sense means within the chain of terms 'duty'-'obligation'-'responsibility'-'allegiance'-'love' are far from precise. But the over-all meaning is quite clear: it expresses the conviction that the moral conscience, as it moves through the links of this chain, associates itself more intimately with the persons and the interests that it encounters. This development has its inception when man recognizes that value is resident in all things, and so acknowledges a duty to respect these inherent values. At this level of intension, the moral relations that the self sustains with the world are largely external: the agent-situation duality is strongly marked, and the agent feels that he must compromise his own values in order to further others that are extraneous but compulsive. Here, where the cautions of expediency are transformed into the resolves of duty, we first fully sense what has all along been the case: that the morally good does not

wait upon our choice but demands our adherence. But when this good is discovered only in the guise of duty it appears as quite remote from and irrelevant to our own intimate concerns. Duty is accepted as valid and urgent, but it is felt as an extrinsic force that constrains us to a course other than our own. Duty defines a moral content that has no theoretical limits and needs no correction in principle. But this content does require personalization. This term has a double sense: man as a moral agent must grasp this content defined by duty as being also the definition of his own true good; and this content must be perpetually reconsidered and refined in the light of the actual situation in which it applies, so that it may be adequate to the individuality of each situation. This is to say that abstract and general duties must become concrete intentions about particular occasions. In effecting this transition, the key factors are *commitment* and *specification*. Man commits himself as a responsible agent; and the responsibility he accepts is that of realizing specific values through a definite course of action. This whole development reaches its climax when the self transfers its own value to something other than itself, and so through love intends the good of this other.

These twin processes of moral extension and moral intention are temporally coincident and causally inter-dependent. The continued extension of our moral horizon depends upon the strength of the attachments that we have already secured; where the self remains the sole moral locus, a "vanishing perspective" soon absorbs the distinctive values of other things into an amorphous background, and so reduces them to a status of indifference. It is only by putting ourselves sympathetically in the position of other things, and seeing the world as through their eyes, that we can extend the reach and the fullness of our moral vision; each such attachment gives us a vantage point from which we can seize as an opportunity what was before only postulated as a duty. Conversely, the continued intension of our commitment depends upon the depth of our moral vista. When we bestow our love within only a narrow circle, one of two things usually happens: this love, through sheer uniformity and concentration, has soon exhausted its own energy and despoiled the resources of the thing that is

loved; such is the fate of most grand passions and violent allegiances; or this love, through close confinement and involvement, comes to confuse its object with itself, becomes its own object, and so becomes self-love; this is exemplified alike in the fanatic, the zealot, the miser, and the jealous man.

If we seek too great a moral extension without the intension to support this, duty soon degenerates into expediency, which can all too easily find excuses for subordinating others to the interests of self: duty's vision is wide but its reach is narrow, unless love reveals its objects as things to be adored. If we seek too great a moral intension without the extension to occupy this, love soon degenerates into desire, which is its own excuse for being and for being fulfilled: love's grasp is strong but its hold is short, unless duty discloses to it new objects to be seized.

The moral ideal is the simple one of loving all things unboundedly. We all experience an intimation of this when, if only for a moment, we commit ourselves utterly to alleviating the plight of a friend, a cause, an ideal, a sick child, or even a stray kitten or a lost puppy; then we see this stricken creature or this threatened purpose as the sole proper concern of the universe. The ideal of embracing all things permanently in such a concern is realized by few, if any; it is not given to every man to be a great moral agent, as greatness of any kind is not given to many. The obligation that is incumbent upon everyone, and the possibility that is open to everyone, is that of extending and intensifying his moral community as greatly as lies within his powers. Man goes forewarned that to do less than this, to sacrifice the spirit of communion to either an abstract sense of duty or a possessive sense of love, is to stultify his own well-being.

## II

We can now summarize these facts made available by the moral conscience, express the results in a more systematic manner, and draw out the more important implications that issue from them. I shall make this discussion as brief and sharp as possible by pointing it at three central topics.



1. The first of these concerns the basic structure of the moral process. What are the forces that dominate this process, and what are the essential stages through which it passes as these forces emerge and contribute to its development? Three major forces, and so three corresponding moral levels, can be distinguished: I shall identify these as *preference*, *commitment*, and *devotion*.

Preference is a force that expresses the needs and desires of the individual creature; it is self-centered and self-directed. But this does not mean that it is self-enclosed; it is incited by things outside itself, and it knows that it must reckon with the world. No intelligent man has ever believed himself to be, or has acted as though he were, in the situation attributed to him by contemporary moral subjectivists: a situation, namely, in which his approval constitutes value and his feelings are the only things that need to be considered. On the behavioral level of preference, man acknowledges his dependence on the world; but he acknowledges no other relation to the world, and his intention is to realize personal values by exploiting the value-possibilities that the world lays open to him. Even here, man knows that value is grounded in the conditions of life, not in his own emotions, and he seeks to turn these conditions to his private advantage. Acts that are dominated by preference may exhibit great prudence, skill, and self-knowledge as a man attempts to realize the most personal value from the resources of his character and the offerings of the world. Such acts remain on a low moral level because they seek to subvert the bivalence of the moral situation in favor of one of the parties to it.

Commitment is a force that expresses the individual's acceptance of the value of other things as coordinate with his own value. The world becomes more than merely something to be reckoned with: it is transformed into an object of respect. Man here recognizes that the realization of his values and purposes is not simply dependent upon the world, but is inextricably bound up with the realization of values and purposes that are other than his own. Man discovers that he is morally, as well as physically and biologically, involved with the world: that he

can realize himself only by contributing to the realization of others. Consequent upon this discovery, man commits himself to the furtherance of ends and intentions that are determined without reference to his own preferences. The essence of this act of commitment is the irrevocable pledging of one's efforts to the pursuit of certain courses of action and the achievement of certain purposes independently of the personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction that these may entail. When man commits himself to something, be it a person, a group, or an idea, he enters into a relation that takes precedence over his preferences. Religious confirmation, national allegiance, marriage, social or fraternal initiation, group participation, friendship, the reading of a book, the buying of a puppy, are all alike cases of commitment: they differ in their ritual, their content, and their intensity, but they all pledge the self to something that is remote in space, time, and consequences. Quite evidently, such commitment is not entered upon in isolation from preference; nor does it abridge the force of this latter. We commit ourselves in the direction of what we prefer, and we withdraw from commitments that demand too much of us without yielding an adequate reward. As a moral force, commitment stands above preference, but it does not replace it. As a stage of moral emergence, commitment represents a development beyond preference, but it does not preclude a relapse into this. In committing ourselves we become real moral agents because we pledge ourselves to purposes that are objectively grounded, and we surrender the right, though never the power, to withdraw in the face of the personal consequences of our commitment. It is in behavior executed on this level that the bivalence of the moral life stands out most sharply: the agent recognizes objective values that are potential within the situations he encounters, he acknowledges his obligation to actualize these values, and he dedicates his resources to this task.

Devotion is a force that expresses the individual's merger of himself with the object of his interest. In devotion we transcend our individuality by immersing ourselves in the concerns of something else. When we are devoted, we commit ourselves through preference and we prefer the content of our commit-

ment. Expressed technically, this means that we associate the values of the self with other values, that we conceive our own well-being as an aspect of some larger concern, that the distinction of self and other is obliterated in the sense of a shared nature and purpose. Put differently, devotion abolishes the means-end relation that characterizes moral behavior at all levels lower than this: we do not, as in preference, seek to exploit the world for our own ends; nor do we, as in commitment, subordinate the self to ends that are extrinsic to it. When man devotes himself to something he fuses himself so intimately with the object of his concern that the external relations of means-end, agent-situation, and preference-commitment are dissolved. For this reason, devotion is a force that is largely unconcerned with either motives or results; it asks neither justification nor reward; it is at once so unselfish and so uncritical that it leads us to act in the interest of its object without consideration of the effects of such action upon ourselves or upon the neutral surroundings.

It is the essence of devotion that through it we refute the privacy of the ego. We accept the values of others as our own, and we make ourselves participants in others' enterprises. In devotion man reaches the highest level of moral experience. But this does not mean that it is either possible or desirable for devotion to utterly replace preference and commitment as moral forces, and for man to confine his moral life to the plane of devotion. It is not possible for devotion to rule life exclusively, because preference and commitment are real forces that express real factors in man's nature. Our escape from the locus of the self to a wider and more public domain is always incomplete and temporary: we retain the sense of our identity through even the closest association, and we return from our devotions if only to rediscover their importance to us. It is not even desirable for devotion to assume too dominant a role in life, for it then becomes too intense in the pursuit of its object and too narrow in its regard for the rest of the world; the intimacy that devotion gives us with some things is paid for by a remoteness from many other things. To its object, devotion often occurs as an intrusion: it is not welcome because it assumes

too much. The refutation of our own privacy that we achieve in devotion threatens the privacy of other things; this threat can be obviated only if commitment keeps us alert to the values that other things assert for themselves and to the furtherance of which our devotion should be confined. Similarly, devotion threatens the integrity of the self, which can be assured only if preference voices its interests forcefully. The moral process is not one in which the later stages suppress the earlier; it is rather a process in which the forces of preference, commitment, and devotion must continually operate, and in which the final outcome is a synthesis of these forces.

2. If these are the forces that by their interplay determine the structure and stages of the moral process, then what sort of a creature is man, who undergoes these forces and lives this process? The general answer is obvious: man is a many faceted character. The major of these facts can now be distinguished. *First*, man is a psycho-biological organism. He is under continual pressure to make good the needs, to satisfy the desires, that issue from his physical nature. At the most primitive level, this character expresses itself as a plethora of local and limited wants, each of which is autocratic and has no regard beyond itself. Man can never elude this facet of himself: but he does learn to control and order these wants, to sacrifice them within limits, to postpone their fulfillment, to discipline their fervor, and to educate the release they seek. This he does by developing a sense of his personality and his career, by reference to which he can criticize and qualify his separate wants. Conditioned by habit and trained to prudence, man integrates himself as a person and adjusts himself to others. *Second*, man is a responsible agent. He acknowledges values other than his own and commits himself to their realization. Man obligates himself beyond his private frontiers, accepts responsibility for the future, and holds fast to a course despite its private consequences. *Third*, man is a creative person. Through the projection of himself that he achieves in devotion he actively contributes to the character of other things. He adds his own substance to that which he loves and so creates what could not have been without him. In all of life that is domi-

nated by preference, value is exploited: the values of things are actualized, and so are made no longer available. The same is largely the case with commitment: some values are sacrificed in order that others may be achieved. If this were the end of the matter — as contemporary theories seem largely to maintain — values would eventually be exhausted, and we would reach a state of axiological entropy. This does not occur simply because man is a creator of values. We all of us, on some scale and to some extent, create values by caring for things, by pouring out our resources upon them, and so by giving them a value (for themselves and for others as well as for ourselves) — that they did not originally possess. There is nothing mysterious in the creation of value: it consists in extending and intensifying the capacity of men for doing good and the capacity of things for yielding satisfaction. In love, friendship, and kindness; in educating, organizing, and leading men; through art, craft, and skill; by conceiving ideas, forging tools, and building institutions; in these and other ways we create values. On the basis of the evidence of the moral life, man is all of these things — organism, agent, and creator, and equally each of them. Priority of different sorts can be ascribed to each. But the search for absolute priority seems fruitless. Rather than trying to reduce man to one of his facets, with the consequent denial or at least neglect of others, we should accept them all as ultimate constituents of his nature.

3. In view of this structure of the moral process, and of the character of man as engaged in this process, what follows concerning the human status in the world order? As I have earlier suggested, it is clear that man is a multi-dimensional creature. The number and nature of these dimensions can now be explicated. The actual facts of the moral life, the structure and content of moral decisions, imply that man inhabits at once the three dimensions of Necessity, Possibility, and Freedom. First, man is involved, but not engulfed, in the causal nexus that pervades all entities and events; he suffers confinement from the necessary conditions of his own nature and the necessary connections that bind things together. Second, man confronts alternative ways of expressing his nature and of



moving within this system of order and connection; he may act toward several possible ends and through the employment of many possible means. Third, man encounters opportunities to transform the world order by his contribution to it; he can create what could not have been without him and need not have been even with him save for his own freely willed effort. Thus man is at once the victim, the instrument, and the author of circumstances: his biography is a compound of determinism, indeterminism, and creativity. Man's modes of existence within these dimensions, and the transitions by which he passes from one to another, are reflected in the moral life in the familiar progression traced earlier, from instinct, through pleasure, prudence, duty, and responsibility, to love.

All of these forces are required to animate and direct man's course through life, man's encounters with the world, just because man acts in different dimensions through different facets of his character. The chief of these forces, which I have identified as preference, commitment, and devotion, represent the concentration of human character and effort within one or the other of these dimensions. In preference man succumbs to the actual; he wants because he lacks, and his behavior is largely controlled by the necessities of his own nature and his environment. In commitment man exploits the potential; he gives form to the indeterminately good, and his conduct serves to actualize what was before only possible. In devotion man ministers to the ideal; he lends his substance to ends that are beyond him, and his acts create new possibilities. Man's existence within these dimensions is a function of the metaphysical order: it finds expression in his character and it reverberates through all the moments of his life. Morality, properly conceived, is a name for the total process through which man orients himself within these dimensions and fills these roles.

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## INDETERMINISM

This article is not intended to commit me to a definite conclusion. What I want to do in the course of it is, without necessarily adopting indeterminism, to make certain suggestions to the indeterminist as to how to deal with some difficulties which he ought to, but does not usually face. I am myself much impressed by the plausibility of the view that everything is completely determined by causes, chiefly because I am enough of a coherentist to believe that if one view comes nearer to making a coherent system of the universe than does another, this constitutes an argument in favor of the former view, and it is obvious that determinism makes the universe more of a coherent system than does indeterminism, when we consider judgments of fact. It may however be argued that this is out-balanced by the incoherence of determinism with ethical judgments which we cannot help making, and however that may be it must at the very least be admitted that indeterminism remains, as far as we can see, a real possibility, which it is well worth while working out. Most indeterminists have neglected the latter task. I mean they have usually contented themselves with attacking the determinist and not attempted to give any sort of definite account just how indeterminism would come in. For they can hardly escape admitting that causation at least plays a part in human life, that human actions are at least partially determined, and if they did deny it in words they could not regulate their life without constantly assuming it in practice. Without at least some causal influence, if not complete determination, any of the reliable predictions we are constantly making or assuming about human action would be impossible. There would be no sense even in taking a railway ticket to the place where you wanted to go if at least probable predictions could not be made about human actions. But, if so, is it not incumbent on indeterminists to give some account of the respective role of the two elements, the undetermined element and the element of causal determination? I shall now try myself on their behalf to give some answer to this question. Indeterminism

being not capable of absolute disproof, we ought at least to consider how it could be understood in detail before we decide whether to accept or reject it. Central to this is the question what it is to be supposed is causally determined in human action. On the view under discussion our actions are not completely determined by causes, but they are partly determined by them. What then does this causation do?

I think it is clear that we must not take partial determination as meaning that our free acts consist of two parts, one of which is completely determined and the other not influenced by causation at all. Apart from the difficulty of carrying out such a division in detail, there is the fatal objection that we could in that case not even regard it as more probable than not that a person who had shown high moral character would continue to do so as regards any future free action. For the only free, and therefore the only moral part of his action, would be one with which causation had nothing to do. Nor could we suppose that the free part of his action was at all influenced by motives, even the motive of regard for the moral law. For influence involves partial causation.

Might the indeterminist then say that, if not a certain part, at least certain attributes of a free act are completely determined by causation and the others, for which we are responsible, left completely undetermined? This I think is open to the same objection as the previous suggestion. I should, on the indeterminist view, be responsible only for an action of mine having those attributes which were not determined; and if they were completely unaffected by causation, no prediction ascribing attributes of this kind to future actions of mine would have any probability. Yet, to omit less creditable instances, I cannot help thinking it probable that if I was lent a book by a friend, some future action of mine would have the attribute of carrying with it the return of the book. Yet whether I return a borrowed book or not, except in cases where I was physically forced to return or prevented from returning it, or returned it or not in sheer absentmindedness, is one of the things which any indeterminist will hold to be dependent on free will. Further, the occurrence of an action on my part carrying with it the

return of the book is obviously causally dependent on a belief that the book was lent to me and that belief itself is usually causally dependent on an event describable as the lending to me of the book. It is obvious that in this and countless other instances which I could mention the attributes in question are partly determined by causation.

If, however, partial determination cannot be reduced to complete determination of a part, what is it? One view which might be suggested is that with free actions previous causes exclude absolutely some alternatives, but do not in the least determine which we are to choose among those alternatives not absolutely excluded. The positive part of this statement is of course true: if I am at Cambridge, it is causally impossible for me to be in London five minutes later, and if it is admitted, as I think it should be, that I cannot will what I know or firmly believe to be impossible, I cannot even will that I should be there. My lack of previous medical training absolutely excludes my doing certain things in the case of a street accident. I think that it would be not only improbable but psychologically impossible that I should kill somebody merely because he disagreed with me in philosophy (although perhaps a reservation should be added here to exclude the case of my becoming insane). Many otherwise possible volitions are excluded simply because the idea of them does not occur to me, and the calling up of an idea in our mind, as opposed to the adoption of an attitude of attention liable to facilitate the calling up of suitable ideas, can hardly be attributed to free will. But clearly this is not enough. The indeterminist does not really wish to maintain that causation merely excludes certain actions and leaves the choice between those not excluded quite unaffected by previous events. If he did, he would have to admit that, provided it was not absolutely impossible for a given man to lose (or keep) his temper on a given occasion, the number of times he had lost it before or his previous thoughts about the provoking incident had no relevance at all to the question whether he lost or kept it this time. The most good-tempered and the most bad-tempered man would then be equally likely to yield to the temptation. The conversion of the worst or the perversion of the best man may not be absolutely excluded, but the odds are

clearly against it. If I repeatedly tell lies, I do not necessarily exclude the possibility of my telling the truth on a subsequent occasion when I am tempted to lie, but I surely at least make it less likely that I will do so. It may be said that by my previous bad behaviour I have at least excluded one otherwise possible alternative, namely, my telling the truth with ease or as a matter of course where it seems to me much against my interest to do so; but surely we may be able to say in the case of a man who habitually yields to a certain temptation, that it is more probable than not that he will yield to a future temptation, not merely that he will either not resist it at all or resist it with difficulty.

Prof. Campbell<sup>1</sup> holds the view that causes can never alter the amount of will-power we are capable of putting forth, but merely bring it about that more (or less) will-power is required to produce a given result than would otherwise be the case. But surely it is not only that a habitually good man needs less will-power than a habitually weak man to resist his desires when he thinks it right, but that he is likely, on any given occasion which requires it, to put forth more. If he did not do that he would not be morally better than the weak-willed man, at least on the indeterminist view, for he would not be performing a harder act of will, and the likelihood is accentuated by past events, such as his previous exercise of will and his good up-bringing.

All this seems to support the view that partial determination should be defined in terms of probability. Clearly the indeterminist wants to be able to say both that predictions carrying certainty as regards free human actions *qua* free are in principle impossible, and also that probable predictions are possible. Can we then solve the problem by saying that what is determined is that the occurrence of a free act of a given kind has a certain degree of probability? The prospect of its occurrence is clearly, if not made certain, at least affected by previous events in a very considerable degree, and how can this be interpreted except in terms of probability? It

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<sup>1</sup> *Scepticism and Construction*, pp. 168 ff.



must be noted, however, that to adopt this line of defence is to take what one might call a much more objective view of probability than is usually considered plausible. According to any view of probability commonly accepted by logicians, at a given time a possible future event is neither probable nor improbable in itself, though it may be probable or improbable relatively to certain data, and when, as usually, we employ the word "probable" without any specific reference, we mean "probable relatively to the data we possess." On this, I think, advocates of a frequency view and of a type of view like Keynes' would be in agreement, however different in other respects was their interpretation of probability. The indeterminist too can no doubt admit that a future event has a certain degree of probability relatively to our evidence, but it seems he would need to hold also that possible future events, since they are not made objectively certain by previous events, while these events are yet relevant to them, are really more or less probable at a given time apart from any question of their relation to the evidence we have. This point must not be misunderstood. I do not mean that the indeterminist would have to hold that probability belonged to an event in itself in the sense of being a quality and not a relational property. This he need not hold, but it seems he must hold that a future event is never certain, even relatively to all the evidence objectively in existence, i.e., relatively to all the relevant events which have ever occurred, but even objectively only more or less probable. This probability would be the absolute probability of the event, which might change as time went on and as there occurred *undetermined*, i.e., only partially determined, events relevant to it, but in the case of a free act would never become certainty till the act was actually performed. It would really be probable or improbable that a certain event would happen, everything conceivable taken into account, and not merely probable or improbable relatively to a selection from the sum total of past events such as what we regard as the evidence for or against the probability of an event.

A further difficult question now arises for the indeterminist. Has this probability a definite degree? A definite degree seems to imply mathematical measurement, but surely

it cannot objectively be the case that, for example, at 10 a.m. today the probability of Mr. A. telling a certain lie at 11 a.m. is precisely 0.86478. Yet, if the probability has no definite degree, is anything definite at all determined by past events in regard to free acts except for those attributes which are completely determined or excluded independently of our freedom, a distinction which we have already found not to be adequate to the problem? Our attempt on behalf of the indeterminist to sort out the element which is determined from the element which is not thus seems to have failed. That an event has some probability is not of much interest, for it might have any degree of probability between 0 and 1. What we want to know is not whether it has some degree of probability, but approximately what its degree is, or at least whether it is about as probable as not or much more probable than not or the reverse. If the only effect that past events have on a possible future free act *qua* free is that they give it some probability or other without giving it any definite degree of probability, what is the difference between the effect of a strong temptation to lie on a man who has been badly brought up and has constantly lied in the past and a weak temptation on a man who has been well brought up and lied very rarely and only under great provocation? In neither case is it impossible or certain that the man will lie; it must be a question of degree of probability. And how can the degree of probability be determined by past events without the latter determining a definite degree? It hardly seems satisfactory to say that what is determined is that the probability falls within a certain range, say, between 0.8 and 0.9, for to say that it falls between two values would be to say that it occupies one or other of the intermediate values, we do not know which, and this is to revert to the view that what is determined is a definite degree of probability after all. What the indeterminist view requires to be undetermined is not the degree of probability relative to previous events; this is certainly not altered by my "free will." I cannot alter causal laws or logical relations of probability. What "free will" may do is to bring about the improbable and not the probable event when it is improbable that I shall do what I believe to be right. The fact that a man acted rightly

after a long spell of wrongdoing would not on the indeterminist view make the proposition that he would act rightly probable in advance of his action.

The objective view of probability which I have suggested as a consequence of indeterminism would have specially curious consequences if the general theory of probability accepted were of the frequency type. This does not trouble me, as I am not at all inclined to hold a frequency view except as regards one narrowly specialized sense of the term "probability," but since frequency theories are popular, it is worth noting. On the frequency view, probability cannot belong to a single event, but only to a class of events. To say that an event is probable is to say, roughly, that under a given kind of conditions the kind of event will happen more frequently than not. But, if indeterminism is true, it is never determined that a particular kind of free act will happen more frequently than not, only that it will probably do so, and how this second probability could again be defined in terms of frequency I cannot conceive. And to say that the probability of a man's lying had a certain degree would on the frequency theory be to say that under similar conditions  $n$  lies were told in  $m$  cases or that the ratio tended to that. This would amount to saying that it was determined absolutely that a certain proportion of lies would occur but not in which specific cases the lie would be told. If so, I suppose it would follow that if I did not lie when tempted today, I or somebody else would have to lie some other time to keep up the proportion, an odd conclusion indeed.

Can the indeterminist do anything to soften down or remove the above paradox? He might say that probability did not signify any objective relation at all, defining probability solely in terms of *rational expectation*. (*Actual expectation* would not serve the purpose because such a definition of probability would be incompatible with our making mistakes in judgments of probability which are other than mistakes about our actual subjective state.) Future events where human freedom was involved would then be probable only in the sense that we could rationally expect them. This view of probability would go naturally with the view that causality is only a matter of regular sequence and does not involve any neces-

sary relation or intrinsic connection between cause and effect, but it would be compatible also even with the view that causality was a matter of logical entailment, combined with determinism. If the latter view were combined with determinism, it would follow that the objective relation really necessitated and not merely probabilified, and it would only be on account of our ignorance that considerations of probability entered at all. But on an indeterminist view any causal relations which affect at all human actions *qua* free are not necessitating but probabilifying. Therefore, if an indeterminist wants to get rid of objective probability relations, he must deny objective causal relations as even partially determining acts *qua* free. This, as we have seen above, is paradoxical in the extreme. It is indeed quite obvious that even free acts are at least affected by causes in the ordinary sense of these words. So to avoid objection the only course open to him is to deny that the ordinary sense of "affected by causes" involves objective causal relations, or at least to deny that we are entitled to assert objective causal relations in any case, thus softening the paradox of refusing to admit them in the case of free acts alone. Since it is plain that free acts are subject to causal influences in the ordinary sense of causation, he must either contradict the obvious or maintain that the ordinary sense of causation (when freed from muddles) does not involve any objective connection, but only regular sequence. This I personally regard as such a choice of evils as to constitute a serious objection to the view in question (i.e., indeterminism plus a denial of objective probability relations). One difficulty I feel is this: if I am, on the ground of events *q*, *r*, and *s*, to be justified in believing that *p* will probably occur, it would seem that my belief must have some objective basis. How can the belief be justified unless what I infer and that from which I infer it are really connected? If they are not, must I not just be mistaken in my probable inferences? If *q* has nothing objectively to do with increasing *p*'s probability, how can I rationally infer the probability of *p* from *q*? But another objection is that, especially in cases of free choice, I am, often at least, positively aware of some tendency in my nature pushing me towards a certain course and another perhaps opposing. This is particularly the

case if I go or even try for a short time to go against what is felt as my "strongest desire." It is not merely that I rationally believe on the strength of past experience that I am likely to perform a certain act; but that there is something objectively in my experience positively impelling me in that direction. The experience of moral struggle, it seems to me, cannot possibly be interpreted without this admission.

This leads me on to an alternative suggestion. The objective connection we want might be provided by the concept of causal tendency. Perhaps the best course for the indeterminist, or indeed anybody, would be to accept this concept as ultimate. That would give an objective basis other than our ignorance for the concept of probability and it might even be possible to define probability in terms of this concept. Tendencies are not always realised, so the existence of a tendency does not give certainty, but at least it gives rise to some presumption that it will be realized. The view I have suggested should appeal to those philosophers who are essentially empirically-minded but yet feel dissatisfied with the regularity theory of causation. One of the chief arguments for the latter theory is that, unless causation is reduced to regular sequence, it is impossible to give an empirical explanation of the origin of the idea of cause, and if to meet this argument we claim a direct experience of causation, we must face the objection that we never experience the complete cause of anything. What then is left but to say that we experience causal tendencies? We do indeed seem to be directly aware in experience of an unrealized but realizable tendency both in the physical sphere when, as Professor Stout has insisted, for example, we press against an object and in the mental sphere when we hesitate between alternatives or resist any sort of temptation. These experiences do, I think, give us a positive notion of *tendency*, which we might otherwise think was just a name to cover cases where we thought *C* might produce effect *E* but did not know whether it would. This notion might supply the objective basis required for probability judgements. We may compare the notion of *prima facie* duty in ethics. Where there was only one unopposed tendency, its realisation would be, I suppose, certain, but where there are different tendencies it is a matter of

probability. "A has some degree of probability" would then, it may be suggested, become "there is a tendency in A's favour and no completely decisive tendency or tendencies against A." "A is probable (in the sense of more probable than not)" would become "the tendency or tendencies in A's favour are stronger than those against A but not sufficiently so to necessitate the occurrence of A." On a determinist view we always, and on an indeterminist view as regards matters where free will or objective chance, if there be such a thing, does not enter, we should have to add the qualification "as far as can be foreseen, humanly speaking"; but this qualification will be unnecessary and the probability objective in cases, if there are such, where a tendency, though *per se* stronger than the opposing tendencies, is not sufficiently so to overwhelm all possible opposition, but may itself be prevented from realisation by the exercise of undetermined freedom. We might hold that tendency, like other intensive qualities, while admitting of different degrees, did not admit intrinsically of mathematical measurement. We should then have to explain how it is that in some cases probability can be exactly measured, and this would perhaps not be too difficult. These after all are cases of physical determination, not human freedom, and the measurement depends not on an objective equality in the tendencies at work — if a penny falls heads up on a given occasion, the tendencies favouring its doing so are no doubt stronger on that occasion than the opposing tendencies despite the fact that we are bound to treat them as equal in estimating probabilities — but on the relatively subjective fact that there is no knowable ground on the basis of which we could make predictions favouring one alternative rather than the other or others. Outside this sphere probability is certainly subject to an inexact quasi-measurement, since we can compare a non-measurable probability to a measurable one and see that the former is greater or smaller than the latter, e.g., I may rationally judge that it is more probable that the Conservatives will win the next election in Great Britain than that I shall have all the aces in my hand the next time I play bridge. But it may well be that, except in the artificial cases I have mentioned, probability is incapable of exact measurement, not because we have



not discovered how to measure it, but because it is the sort of thing that cannot be exactly measured at all.

A confusion as to the meaning of the phrase "strongest desire" has led a good many people to assert that determinism must be true because we cannot act against the strongest desire, and a good many others to assert that indeterminism must be true because, if determinism were true, we could not act against the strongest desire and we obviously do sometimes act against the strongest desire. Now if the "strongest desire" means the desire which prevails, we certainly cannot act against it, but this is a mere tautology, whether a determinist or indeterminist view be taken. But, if it means the desire which we feel most strongly, then the proposition that we must always act in accord with the desire or the group of desires<sup>2</sup> which we feel most strongly asserts an alleged causal law, and is as such not self-evidently true or provable deductively. (I think myself that some psychological causal laws as to tendencies can be seen *a priori*, but I certainly do not see the truth of this law *a priori* and most modern philosophers hold that they see the truth of no causal laws at all *a priori*.) In order to ascertain whether action against the strongest desire in this sense occurs, we are therefore driven back to the ordinary criteria of empirical psychology, i.e., introspection and the behavioristic method, and have to ask whether we ever observe such actions in ourselves or have inductive reason to infer them in others. As long as we do not introduce *a priori* assumptions I do not see how the answer to this question can be long in doubt. It seems obvious to me by introspection that, when I get out of bed in the morning, I commonly do not act in accordance with the desire or desires which I feel most strongly, and to pass from little things to great, it would be a fantastic hypothesis to suppose that all martyrs and people

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<sup>2</sup> The phrase "group of desires" is inserted to cover the case where a particular desire is felt more strongly than any other, but does not lead to action because it is felt less strongly than a number of desires taken all together which support an opposite course of action, though more strongly than any one of these desires taken by itself. I admit that the way I have formulated the principle is not quite satisfactory, but I think it is clear what is meant and a fully adequate formulation would raise too many complications.

who have submitted to torture rather than do what they thought wrong have at all stages of their martyrdom always felt the desire to do their duty together with any other desires which may have served as motives for their actions more strongly than the desire to avoid pain. Even one contrary particular would be sufficient to overthrow the universal proposition, and there are surely a great many such particulars. Always to act in accord with the desires he feels most strongly is surely just the mark of a weak man "without character" who treats his own feelings as the most important things in the universe. But the proposition that we do not always act in accord with the desire or group of desires we feel most strongly does not necessarily contradict determinism. Even if everything that I do be determined by my desires (apart from external obstacles), it does not follow that the causal efficacy of a desire varies only in proportion to its felt strength. The latter is not the only characteristic of a desire, and might not variations in its other characteristics have some effects also? Some kinds of desire might be intrinsically more efficacious than others of a like strength, at least in some people. Or habits and associations might increase the causal force of a desire without increasing its felt keenness or increase it more than they increased the latter. Even if it is difficult to say what the other causally relevant factors are, we are not entitled except on the ground of strong inductive evidence of a scientific type to rule out all factors except one. Consequently one important argument against determinism seems to me to disappear. Determinism is not incompatible with action against the strongest desire in the sense in which it is obviously true that we do act against the strongest desire. It is only if we take a third sense of "strongest desire" as meaning neither the desire which absolutely prevails nor the desire which is felt most strongly, but the desire which tends causally most strongly to the production of action that we can say that the determinist cannot and the indeterminist can hold it possible to act against the strongest desire,<sup>3</sup> (and even then the determinist would not be committed

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<sup>3</sup> With a reservation, like that given in connection with the second sense of "strongest desire."

to this unless he made the further assumption that desire was the sole causal factor in determining how we acted, granting physical capacity).

Most indeterminists would limit action against the desire felt most strongly to cases where a man acts from a moral motive. For this limitation I do not see any adequate ground. Lady Macbeth is depicted as having shrunk back from murdering Duncan because he resembled her father as he slept, but is it not quite conceivable that she might by a strong act of will have stifled her scruples and compassion and committed the murder all the same? Surely a man may commit crimes as well as good acts although at the moment he feels the desire to avoid the risk more strongly than the desire for the supposed gain, forcing himself, like the good man, though from bad motives, to action despite his fears. People who take the view I am criticizing would defend their position by saying that action in accord with the strongest (most keenly felt) desire could be explained by desire but action against it could not be explained by any except the moral motive, but I do not see why other motives might not also serve. In order to get what he wants in the future (even when the desire is quite selfish and even immoral) a man very commonly has to go against the desire he feels most at the time. Even if this is only possible by an exercise of free will in the indeterminist sense, which I very much doubt, we cannot limit free will to right actions if we are not to exclude responsibility for wrong. Further, I have pointed out that, even where our actions are determined by desire, we cannot argue that they are determined by the strongest desire in this sense because it has not been shown that the causal efficacy is in proportion to the felt strength of a desire. As a matter of fact it seems to me that it is often just when a person has decided to act against a desire that the desire is likely to be felt most strongly. For, other things being equal, one would expect to feel a desire most strongly toward that which one has been immediately before cut off from having, especially when the deprivation is due to one's own voluntary action, though in at least the less acute cases of conflict one's desires would soon tend to readjust themselves.

The indeterminist should then give some account like this of free action: Previous events and causal laws limit the number of alternatives at all possible; they further commonly render one alternative more attractive than the others. Then the causal tendency towards adopting it will be more powerful, and it will be more probable that the agent will adopt it. Indeed in a wide sense of "attractive" and "powerful," that the two propositions stated in the last sentence follow is almost a tautology. But we must distinguish the felt keenness and the actual causal efficacy of a desire: often the moral motive may be felt less keenly than the counteracting desire and yet prevail over the latter, and this cannot be ascribed wholly to free will, since we can say of a good man that he is more *likely* to do *A* than *B* because it is right, though he feels the desire to do *B* more strongly. This probability will be due to character and previous events, including previous acts of free will; it is clearly not created by the present act of free will. It will depend on the degree of strength of the causal tendencies involved, but their real strength in tending to produce action need not be identified with their felt strength. Whatever the probability, provided it falls short of certainty, the action rightly judged beforehand to be more probable may not occur because the agent may will differently after all, but the probability will be higher in those cases where the impelling forces make it more difficult to decide against the action. The experience of difficulty is an experience of something that positively hampers our efforts, not merely the consciousness that we have failed in the past and the inference that we shall probably fail again in overcoming our desires, but the feeling need not be in proportion to the real degree of difficulty involved but may be more or less than would be expected from this.

The indeterminist, I have argued, is quite capable of meeting the common objection that, once we deny complete causal determination, there is no ground for making even probable predictions. I am less easy about another common objection based on the moral argument that indeterminism, so far from being the only view which can save moral responsibility, is actually incompatible with it. The value of moral arguments for or against a factual conclusion has been disputed, but if we

believe that some ethical judgements are true, which I certainly cannot help doing, the circumstance that some factual conclusion is logically implied by the truth of any ethical judgement whatever or any member of an important class of ethical judgements must constitute an argument in favour of the said factual view. The specific moral objection takes some line such as this: I can easily understand, it may be said, why I should be responsible or be to blame for what I have done wrong if the wrong act<sup>4</sup> follows from my character. It then expresses a bad character in me, proves and issues from my wickedness. But if my will just goes off at a tangent, so to speak, and does something wrong without this following from my character, why should I be to blame for it any more than if the action had been done by somebody else? Since it is not dependent on my character, it cannot indicate any badness in me. The indeterminist may reply by pointing out that we have no idea what character is apart from the way in which it is manifested in behaviour and experience, and concluding that it is only a name for the aggregate of a man's free acts, so that we cannot talk of our acts as determined causally by our character. But, whether there is anything actual corresponding precisely to what we call dispositional properties or whether to talk about the latter is merely to speak hypothetically, the question still remains how a self can conceivably will without causing its volitions, and how, if its volitions are caused by it, they can conceivably fail to follow from something or other in its nature, however obscure what that something is may be to us. The objection may be restated thus: A free act of mine is at any rate an act done by me, and how can it be said to be done by me at all if it is not determined by something in me? If it is done by me, it is caused by me; and if it is caused by me, it must be determined by my nature. The argument does not presuppose the assumption that substance is reducible to causality, for it depends on the meaning of "do" rather than on the meaning of "I." If the self acts at all, it does not merely decide what to do in general but decides the particular nature of the

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<sup>4</sup> By "act," in this article, I always mean "act of will" not "physical act."

act, in so far as not hampered by external circumstances, and if so, must not the specific nature of the act be exactly determined by the self's character? If it is said that it is partly, but only partly, determined by my nature, the reply may be made that, just in so far as it is undetermined, it is not due to me, and therefore in so far I am not to blame, thus flatly contradicting the indeterminist who says that I am to blame for it only in so far as it is undetermined. The argument seems to me strong whether we regard the *I* as an ordered series of experiences or as a substance over and above its experiences. Whether it is a single entity or a group or series of entities which does something, the doer must determine what is done. And, in so far as the acts are not determined by the self, how is the self responsible for them? What responsibility seems to require is not that my acts of will should be undetermined but that I should determine them, and if and in so far as they do not follow from my characteristics, do I determine them any more than if they followed from somebody else's characteristics?

It seems to me that in order to meet this objection the indeterminist must adopt the view called by Professor Broad *libertarianism*<sup>5</sup> and distinguished by the latter from both determinism and indeterminism, and this is, I think, what he has really had in mind all along. Libertarianism, as understood by Professor Broad, is the view that free acts, though determined, are determined by the self as substance and neither by its characteristics nor by past events. Professor Broad objects to the libertarian view that it is obvious that any event in time must, if it has a cause at all, include in its cause previous events to fix its beginning in time. I should have thought that most libertarians would have admitted this and merely maintained that such previous events and characteristics did not constitute the whole cause, but when I mentioned this orally to Professor Broad he said that in that case it would be impossible to distinguish libertarianism from any determinist view. For on any view it is relevant to the causal determination of any event not

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<sup>5</sup> C. D. Broad, *Determinism, Indeterminism and Libertarianism*, pp. 47-8.



only that previous events of a certain kind occurred and characteristics were present, but that they occurred or were present in one substance<sup>6</sup> rather than in another. For instance, on any view it is relevant to the event describable as my remembering something not only that a previous event describable as the learning of it occurred, but that it occurred in me; it is relevant to an event describable as breaking not only that there was an event describable as falling with great force, but that this event occurred to the particular thing which was broken. And similarly with characteristics: the fact that there are bad-tempered people in the world is not directly causally relevant to a particular man's getting angry unless he himself has the characteristic of being bad-tempered, and an article will not tend to break because other articles are fragile. This certainly raises difficulties about the formulation of the libertarian view, and it seems possible to distinguish it from ordinary determinism only if a very sharp separation is made between the substance and its characteristics, at least in the case of the self. Substance as such might then figure in causation in a different way from any in which it is understood to do on an ordinary determinist view. In regard to the physical world at least, it is generally assumed that, whenever a thing causes an event of any sort, the nature of the event could in principle be exactly deduced in accordance with causal laws from characteristics of the thing together with characteristics of other things or events affecting it. It is held by the libertarian that this does not apply to the free acts of the self. The two views might be distinguished as follows: According to the one, all the causal factors may be stated in terms of characteristics, provided we state also what substances or events these characteristics qualify. It would have to be admitted to be equally true that they could be stated in terms of substances, provided we gave the causally effective characteristics of the substances, unless it is the case that there are some events or other entities which are neither themselves substances nor reducible to char-

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<sup>6</sup> "Substance" is here being used in a sense in which it does not necessarily imply that the substance is something 'over and above' its characteristics. The libertarian view, on the other hand, as we shall see, cannot be understood unless we make this assumption about substance.

acteristics of substances, as is *prima facie* the case with snakes seen in delirium or lightning flashes. On the other (libertarian) view there would be in free acts a causal factor which could only be stated in terms of substance; when we had enumerated all the characteristics that could conceivably be enumerated, there would still be left over a factor in the effect which could not be accounted for by any characteristics, but only by a substance which exercises its causality not through or not only through, but to some extent independently of, its characteristics. On the determinist view, when a man is tempted to lie, whether he yields to the temptation or not is decided completely by such factors as the strength of his desires, etc.; on the libertarian view these do not determine exactly what he shall do, but leave more than one alternative open, while usually making the adoption of one more probable than that of any of the others. Which he adopts will be determined by the self, but it will not be determined by any characteristics of the self, though these may contribute to its probability and restrict alternatives.

It seems to me that libertarianism is what indeterminism must come to if it is not to be sheer nonsense. The indeterminist holds that the self decides how it shall act, and therefore, by implication, that it determines its acts, but he denies that they are determined completely by character and circumstances, so he is clearly asserting that the free causality of the self is a causality which is not dependent on the characteristics of the self. It is hard to see how a substance can act as cause except through its characteristics, but at any rate this position is one to which the indeterminist is committed. Free acts cannot well be undetermined in the sense of being uncaused — they are caused by the self, but they might be undetermined in the sense that their nature is not fixed by any past events or universal characteristics of the self, so that prediction would be not only humanly but in principle impossible. In that case the indeterminist view does not really involve a denial of the principle of universal causation. Free acts are caused by the self, although there are no characteristics from which by the help of causal laws the nature of the event caused could be deduced. To be responsible for an action I must surely have caused the action for which I am responsible, but the proposition

that the act is caused does not, according to the libertarian, self-contradictory as this statement may be on some views of causation, entail the proposition that every event is predictable before it happens. To effect such a prediction all characteristics of the event predicted would have to be inferable from characteristics of events which had already occurred and of actually existing things, and this is on the libertarian view impossible in the case of free acts. We should not then have to regard our actions as due to a character completely determined by heredity and environment, for the character is just a set of characteristics, and no set of characteristics would completely determine our actions.

This view has the advantage of doing justice to our feeling that we can, except in pathological or at least highly exceptional cases, always go against our character and antecedents and make a fresh start. It is also in accord with what seems the well-justified conviction that free action involves in some sense the intervention of the self as a whole to decide between different desires. But it does, I fear, involve serious metaphysical difficulties. (1) The very sharp separation between a substance and its characteristics is hard to countenance or understand. It is difficult enough to see what can be meant by the notion of a substance over and above its attributes, but I shall not stress this difficulty much because apart from the question of responsibility there is at least a case for the existence of such a "pure Ego" and because it may be held that we are in introspection and memory immediately aware of such a being. But even if we grant such a substance, we should have, I think, to look on it as essentially linked up with, even if not reducible to, its characteristics, and this seems hard to reconcile with the alleged mode of causation by which it determines events without determining them through its characteristics. (2) I as self do not determine merely that I shall act but how I shall act — otherwise I should not be to blame because the act was bad rather than good — but if so, must not the nature of the act somehow be fixed by some characteristics in me? If it is not, what makes it one kind of act rather than another, and how can I be to blame for it if it is not due to some undesirable characteristics in me? It is admittedly partly deter-

mined by my characteristics, but the libertarian claim is that, just in so far as it is determined by such, it is not free and I am not responsible for it. On the lines I have suggested there seems to be a case for the diametrically opposite view that, just in so far as it is not determined by my character, I am not responsible for it as it is not really my act at all. As I have said, it seems included in the notion of doing that one's acts are determined through one's characteristics.

On the other hand, while it is easy glibly to talk of characteristics in the self, the determinist is faced with the difficulty that he cannot say what they are except by the use of dispositional terms which are essentially hypothetical, so that we cannot in any case form an idea even in outline of any way in which complete deduction from actual characteristics could be effected. Nor must we gloss over the well-known difficulties about responsibility which the determinist has to face though I think they have often been exaggerated. It has been suggested, e.g., by Hume and Lord Russell, that the difficulties disappear if we realize that causation is merely regular sequence and that we therefore must not think of the effect as necessitated by the cause, e.g., of a man's wrong acts as necessitated by past events, though it follows them according to regular laws so that it could have been exactly predicted. This solution is not open to me as I find the regularity theory of causation incredible, but I do not propose to repeat the arguments I have given elsewhere against the latter. I shall only say that, even if freedom does require the absence of necessitation by the past, it also requires a positive notion of causation by the will which cannot possibly be reduced to the mere fact that a state of will of a certain kind is always followed by a given kind of action. If freedom requires that volition should not be determined by its antecedents, it is, at least, equally clear, that it requires that volition should itself really determine and not merely be followed by acts.

Let us now turn to another line of approach. Mr. Wisdom has maintained<sup>7</sup> that the problem of responsibility could be solved only by postulating that each free self existed either

<sup>7</sup> John Wisdom, *Mind and Matter*, chap. VIII.

forever or from the beginning of time. It is hardly to be supposed that he would countenance such a solution to-day, but it may be debated on its own merits. The reason given for adopting it is that if we have come into existence later than the beginning of time, our existence and so our character must have been caused by previous existences thus destroying our responsibility, for we can be ultimately responsible for our acts only if our character was not determined by something other than ourselves. Apart from any objections there may be to drawing such a drastic metaphysical conclusion, the view is open to the objection that it only saves *ultimate responsibility* by throwing it back to our state of mind when we supposedly first came into existence many millions of years ago, when we committed our first acts of will, if time had a beginning, and by an infinite regress if it had none. It may be very much doubted whether it is worth making such a heroic effort to preserve such an attenuated responsibility as this hypothesis would allow. My responsibility now surely cannot be dependent on my state of mind millions of years ago, when I committed my first act of will, still less on a first state and first act of will which never occurred at all.

But, if it is necessary in order to save responsibility that my character should not be ultimately determined by something other than myself, a second alternative besides Mr. Wisdom's is open. This alternative I have, as far as I remember, never seen put forward, but it may be argued that it has the advantage of meeting both the strongest argument against determinism and the strongest argument against indeterminism. The strongest argument against determinism is that I am not responsible for my actions if my character is entirely determined by heredity (or whatever metaphysically corresponds to this in the form of causation by other minds) and environment. The strongest moral argument against indeterminism is that I am not responsible for my actions if they do not follow from my character. Why not combine both the arguments, agreeing with the second so far as to admit that all our actions and states of mind follow from our character, plus our environment, and with the first so far as to admit that our character itself is not completely determined by what went before? A man could

then be blamed because his acts displayed a bad character, and he could not excuse himself by saying that the character was due to somebody else. If we adopt this solution we must, however, face the difficulty that a man's character consists of dispositional properties which are therefore merely hypothetical, or at least if there are any actual qualities behind them we cannot say what these are. What then can be meant by saying that a man's character is undetermined and that his acts are determined by his character? I think this: We can look on a man's character as a set of laws determining his actions. On the ordinary determinist view these laws would be deducible from more general psychological and physical laws as applied to the particular circumstances determining the origin and development of the individual man in question; on the view suggested they would not be thus deducible but must be regarded as ultimate facts about the individual, a sort of causal laws peculiar to himself. They would be affected but not completely determined by what went before, so that each individual would be a genuine new beginning. If we look at character in this way, the view comes much nearer determinism than does any other indeterminist view, for as all a man's acts would still be determined by his character together with his circumstances, and character is a set of laws, they would still theoretically be deducible from their antecedents according to causal laws. For a law still is a law, even when the conditions under which it operates are so narrowly specified as to confine its application to a single individual. But new laws not completely derivable from others would come into force with the birth of every new human being, as on any "emergent" theory of the world genuinely new laws not deducible from others came into force when compounds of a certain kind first appeared. However the laws would merely have being in a hypothetical sense till actually realised, so we had better think of them as not all created at birth, but as continually coming into being when occasions arise to which they have application. A man's character would include laws from which it would follow, e.g., that he would be attracted by the woman he sought to marry, the circumstances of her contact with him being what they were, but these laws would have no applica-



tion when he was only five years old and so would not have any genuine being yet at all. In the case of a converted sinner the laws which determine his behaviour after his conversion would to a large extent have no application at all to his earlier life, although they would have some connection with those that did. We could thus think not only of a man's birth, but of other parts in his life as real beginnings, indeed as much more so since our character is hardly displayed at birth. Yet the view would agree with ordinary determinism in holding that everything was determined by causal laws, though it would differ in introducing very many more ultimate and underivable laws. But, though a man's acts would theoretically be deducible from the laws together with his antecedents in the sense that propositions specifying them would follow logically from these and could be deduced if we knew them, the laws could never be known in advance of the acts to which they applied, because they are not deducible from any other laws, and therefore the prediction could never be effected at all. The last part does not specify a merely human limitation such as the most rigid determinist would have to admit, but something, on this view, intrinsically impossible for any mind.

This hypothesis seems to me a possible compromise of an interesting type, but I must admit that it does not go far enough completely to satisfy the indeterminist, for it does not leave it possible for us ever to have acted differently, our character and circumstances being what they are. On the other hand our character might have been different, and then we should have acted differently. Everything is not fixed irrevocably by what went before, but the point of indetermination, so to speak, is the individual character, and not the single act, as the indeterminist holds. The two views are, however, brought closer together when we remember that character is just an assemblage of laws governing individual acts, and that these are not realised and therefore not all in existence at birth or at any time prior to the end of the life of the individual. It may, however, be urged by someone that no advantage is gained by supposing one's character to be undetermined, since this still leaves us dependent on a character which we did not ourselves make, so that we are no better off in respect of

freedom than if somebody else had made it. Such a person would prefer the libertarian view, but I am inclined to think that the objection depends on making too sharp a separation between character and acts, as if the former were something apart from the acts which compelled them instead of a law exemplified only in the acts themselves. We have thus two alternative theories which differ from strict determinism and may be thought to make possible a more satisfactory account of responsibility than this gives.

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## BERKELEY AND PYRRHONISM

Berkeley laid great stress on the vital importance of refuting scepticism in his *Philosophical Commentaries* (*Commonplace Book*), *Principles of Human Knowledge*, and *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, but very little attention has been given to this aspect of his thought. In this paper, I shall try to show that the exploration of this theme sheds some light on the aims, import, and possible origins of some of Berkeley's ideas.

The complete title of the *Principles* is *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, Wherein the chief causes of error and difficulty in the Sciences, with the grounds of Scepticism, Atheism, and Irreligion, are Inquired into*.<sup>1</sup> The complete title of the *Dialogues* is *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous. The design of which is plainly to demonstrate the reality and perfection of human knowledge, the incorporeal nature of the soul, and the immediate providence of a Deity: in opposition to Sceptics and Atheists. Also to open a method for rendering the Sciences more easy, useful, and compendious*.<sup>2</sup> The introductions to each work, as well as various remarks in the *Philosophical Commentaries*, explain at greater length the author's intention of refuting the sceptics and atheists. In the initial section of the introduction to the *Principles*, Berkeley had said that the attempt to understand the nature of things had led men into all sorts of "uncouth paradoxes, difficulties, and inconsistencies, . . . till at length, having wander'd through many intricate mazes, we find ourselves just where we were, or, which is worse, sit down in a forlorn

<sup>1</sup> George Berkeley, *The Principles of Human Knowledge*, (hereafter referred to as *Principles*), in *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, edited by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, Vol. II, (London and Edinburgh 1949), p. 1. (All references to Berkeley's *Principles*, *Dialogues*, *Philosophical Commentaries*, and *Theory of Vision Vindicated* are to the text in this edition.)

<sup>2</sup> George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, p. 147. (This work is hereafter referred to as *Dialogues*.)

scepticism."<sup>3</sup> And a few sections later, Berkeley stated that his intention was to discover the sources of the absurdities and contradictions that have entered philosophy, and to eliminate them.<sup>4</sup>

The Preface to the *Dialogues* is almost entirely devoted to stating and restating that the author's intention is to destroy atheism and scepticism. Scepticism arises from distinguishing the real nature of things from their apparent nature, and such a distinction leads to all kinds of paradoxes and perplexities. Berkeley's principles will rescue mankind from these difficulties. "If the principles, which I here endeavour to propagate, are admitted for true; the consequences which, I think, evidently flow from thence, are, that atheism and scepticism will be utterly destroyed, many intricate points made plain, great difficulties solved, several useless parts of science retrenched, speculation referred to practice, and men reduced from paradoxes to common sense."<sup>5</sup>

In his notebooks, the *Philosophical Commentaries*, Berkeley noted several times that scepticism was the view he was opposing, or, that it was the direct opposite of what he was advocating. "The Reverse of the Principle [Berkeley's] I take to have been the chief source of all that scepticism and folly all those contradictions and inextricable puzzling absurdities, that have in all ages been a reproach to Human Reason."<sup>6</sup> "I am the farthest from Scepticism of any man."<sup>7</sup> And finally, in a letter Berkeley wrote to Sir John Percival on September 6,

<sup>3</sup> Berkeley, *Principles*, Introduction, par. 1, p. 25. In the original draft of this introduction, Berkeley had said, "[men] are often by their principles lead into a necessity of admitting the most irreconcilable opinion or (which is worse) of sitting down in a forlorn scepticism." *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, pars. 4-5, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Dialogues*, Preface, p. 168. See also p. 167. The point is reiterated again on p. 168 when Berkeley claimed that the main virtue of his theory, if it is correct, would be that "the discouragements that draw to scepticism [would be] removed."

<sup>6</sup> George Berkeley, *Philosophical Commentaries* (*Commonplace Book*), in *Works of Berkeley*, Vol. I (London and Edinburgh 1948), p. 52, entry 411.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70, entry 563. See also p. 15, entry 79, p. 38, entry 304, and pp. 61-2, entry 491.

1710, regarding the initial reaction to the *Principles*, he said "whoever reads my book with due attention will plainly see that there is a direct opposition between the principles contained in it and those of the sceptics."<sup>8</sup>

In the letter to Percival quoted above, Berkeley revealed that one of his great fears when he published the *Principles* was that he might be considered a sceptic. Percival's letter of August 26, 1710, indicated that such a consideration was already being presented.<sup>9</sup> And, of course, it is ironic but true that many times in the eighteenth century Berkeley was interpreted as the greatest sceptic of them all, by figures like Andrew Baxter and David Hume.<sup>10</sup>

With all this emphasis on the sceptics and scepticism, it seems reasonable to inquire why Berkeley was so upset about such a view. Whom was he attacking? Why do such people require such a strong refutation?<sup>11</sup> Some scholars, like G. A. Johnston, have stressed the fact that Berkeley wanted to prove that Locke and Descartes, and possibly Malebranche, were sceptics.<sup>12</sup> But apparently little or no attention has been given to the questions of what scepticism represented for Berkeley, why he considered it so horrendous, why he considered it to be in complete opposition to common sense, what part the identification of Cartesianism and Lockeanism with scepticism played in Berkeley's thought, and what the relation of the Berkelian concept of an attitude towards scepticism was to the conception of scepticism in Berkeley's time. In this paper I shall try to answer these questions at least in part. The answer that I shall offer is a way of interpreting Berkeley in

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<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Rand, *Berkeley and Percival, The Correspondence of George Berkeley and Sir John Percival*, (Cambridge 1914), p. 83.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-3.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Andrew Baxter, *An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*, Vol. II, second edition, (London 1737), Section II, especially pp. 258-60, 267, 270-2, 279-80, 284, and 310; and David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Open Court edition, (La Salle, Illinois 1949), Section XII, p. 173 n.

<sup>11</sup> The same problems could be raised with regard to atheism and atheists, but these are not the concern of this paper.

<sup>12</sup> See for example, G. A. Johnston, *The Development of Berkeley's Philosophy*, (London 1923), pp. 57-9 and 70.

the light of his views about scepticism and the development of Pyrrhonian scepticism at the time. Such an interpretation makes it possible to explain rather than ignore the emphasis on scepticism in the *Principles*, *Dialogues*, and *Philosophical Commentaries*. It seems probable that an author who devotes so much time to discussing such a view must have some reason for so doing. In offering my explanation of this reason, I shall also present a hypothesis regarding part of the development of Berkeley's views, in terms of his having had what Pierre Villey has called "la crise pyrrhonnienne"<sup>13</sup> — the realization of the force and consequences of Pyrrhonism. Such a crisis, I believe, must have happened to Berkeley on reading certain passages in Pierre Bayle's *Dictionary*, and led Berkeley to discover his "refutation" of scepticism.

First of all, what did Berkeley mean by scepticism? This doctrine is defined either explicitly or implicitly in the *Philosophical Commentaries*, the *Principles*, and the *Dialogues*. Altogether Berkeley attributes three doctrines to the sceptics: (1) the sceptic doubts everything;<sup>14</sup> (2) the sceptic doubts the validity of sensible things;<sup>15</sup> (3) the sceptic doubts the existence of real objects like bodies or souls.<sup>16</sup> These three different views constitute the core of the sceptical view for Berkeley.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Pierre Villey-Desmeserets, *Les Sources et l'Évolution des Essais de Montaigne*, Vol. II, (Paris 1908), p. 230. This is what he believes happened to Montaigne on reading Sextus Empiricus.

<sup>14</sup> Rand, *op.cit.*, p. 83, "the sceptics, who ... are not positive as to any one truth." Also, in the *Dialogues*, p. 173, Hylas explains that what he means by a sceptic is "one that doubts of everything."

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Philosophical Commentaries*, p. 61, entry 491. Also in the *Dialogues*, p. 173, Hylas offers as a second definition of a sceptic, "What think you of distrusting the senses, of denying the real existence of sensible things, or pretending to know nothing of them. Is not this sufficient to denominate a man a *sceptic*?" And, in the letter to Percival referred to above, Berkeley stated that he did not wish to be confused with the sceptics, who doubt of the existence of things (Rand, *op. cit.*, p. 83).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Philosophical Commentaries*, p. 15, entry 79, "Mem. that I take notice that I do not fall in w<sup>th</sup> Sceptics Fardella etc, in y<sup>t</sup> I make bodies to exist certainly, w<sup>ch</sup> they doubt of." See also entries 304-5, p. 38. This meaning of scepticism is made most clear in the *Principles*, par. 86 ff. p. 78 seq.



The second and third are corollaries of the first, and were for Berkeley the most interesting features of the position.

Before considering Berkeley's analysis of scepticism at length, let us see how it is related to the discussions of scepticism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

There are two articles in Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* which seem to form the basis, or at least part of the basis of Berkeley's conception of scepticism. These are the articles on Pyrrho of Elis and on Zeno the Eleatic. There is much evidence in the *Philosophical Commentaries* that Berkeley was acquainted with these articles. If we examine some of the material in these articles and the way in which Berkeley apparently used this material, and the evidence that Berkeley was referring to this material in the *Philosophical Commentaries*, I believe we shall have found the key to Berkeley's interest in scepticism, and will then be able to interpret Berkeley's discussions and refutations of scepticism in the *Principles* and *Dialogues*.

The first passage from Bayle that is relevant here is in the famous remark B in the article on Pyrrho, where Bayle related a discussion between two abbots about the dangers of Pyrrhonism to religion. One of the abbots is showing the force of Pyrrhonism against Christian theology, and digresses to show the further support that Pyrrhonists might gain from the new Philosophers, and the relation of Pyrrhonism and modern philosophy. Since the development of Cartesianism, we are told,

none among good Philosophers doubt now but the Sceptics are in the right to maintain, that the qualities of bodies which strike our senses are only meer appearances. Every one of us may say, *I feel heat before a fire*, but not *I know that fire is such in itself as it appears to me*. Such was the style of the ancient Pyrrhonists. But now the new Philosophy speaks more positively: heat, smell, colours, etc. are not in the objects of our senses; they are only some modifications of my soul; I know that bodies are not such as they appear to me. They were willing to except extension and motion, but they could not do it; for if the objects of our senses appear to us coloured, hot, cold, smelling, tho' they are not so, why should they not appear extended and figured, at rest, and in motion, though they had no such thing. Nay, the objects of my senses cannot be the cause of my sensations: I might therefore feel cold and heat, see colours, figures,

extension, and motion, tho' there was not one body in the world. I have not therefore one good proof of the existence of bodies.<sup>17</sup>

Then, after referring to Malebranche for support of this last point, the abbot goes on to demolish the Cartesian argument for the existence of bodies from the fact that God is not a deceiver. Thus, all qualities, both primary and secondary, are reduced to mere appearances, subjective conditions of the mind. The reality of sensible things is denied. Further, since there is no need for real bodies to produce appearance, and there is no proof of the existence of real bodies, the reality of bodies is denied. And this is what Bayle offered as Pyrrhonism developed from the new philosophy, or the new philosophy developed from Pyrrhonism.

In the article on Zeno, in remark G, Bayle argues against the real existence of extension. Once again, he claimed that the sort of Pyrrhonism or sceptical arguments that led philosophers to deny the reality of secondary qualities should lead them to deny the reality of primary qualities.

Add to this [a set of previous arguments], that all the *ways of suspension* which destroy the reality of corporeal qualities, overthrows the reality of extension. Since the same bodies are sweet to some men, and bitter to others, it may reasonably be inferred that they are neither sweet nor bitter in their nature, and absolutely speaking: The modern Philosophers, though they are no Sceptics, have so well apprehended the foundation of the epoch [epoché, suspense of judgment] with relation to sounds, odours, heat, and cold, hardness, and softness, ponderosity, and lightness, savours and colours, etc., that they teach that all these qualities are perceptions of our mind, and do not exist in the objects of our senses. Why should we not say the same thing of *extension*? If a being, void of colour, yet appears to us under a colour determined as to its species, figure and situation, why cannot a being, without any extension, be visible to us, under an appearance of determinate extension, shaped.

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Bayle, *The Dictionary Historical and Critical*, second edition, (London 1737), Vol. IV, p. 654. The reduction of primary qualities to the same status as secondary qualities had already been suggested, as Bayle noted here, by the Abbé Foucher in his *Critique de la Recherche de la Vérité*, (Paris 1675), pp. 44-80, especially pp. 78-80. In Foucher the point neither is made as clearly as in Bayle's writings, nor is as sweeping a conclusion drawn. Foucher's intention was to show how easily the Academic and Pyrrhonian sceptics could destroy Malebranche's and Descartes's philosophy. Bayle's aim was to reduce all modern philosophy to Pyrrhonism.

and situated in a certain manner? Observe, also, that the same body appears to us little or great, round or square, according to the place from whence we view it: and certainly, a body which seems to us very little, appears very great to a fly. It is not therefore by their proper, real, or absolute extension that objects present themselves to our mind: whence we may conclude that in themselves they are not extended. Would you at this day argue thus: *Since certain bodies appear sweet to one man, soure [sic] to another, and bitter to another, etc. I must affirm, that in general they are savoury, though I do not know the savour proper to them, absolutely, and in themselves?* All the modern philosophers would explode you. Why then would you venture to say, *since certain bodies appear great to this animal, middle sized to that, and very little to a third, I must affirm, that in general they are extended, though I do not know their absolute extension.*<sup>18</sup>

This same theme was discussed again in remark H in the article on Zeno, where Bayle asserted:

There are two Philosophical axioms which teach us, one that nature does nothing in vain; the other, that things are done in vain by more means which might have been as commodiously done by fewer. By these two axioms the Cartesians, whom I am speaking of [Malebranche, Fardella, etc.] may maintain that no such thing as matter exists; for whether it doth or doth not exist, God could equally communicate to us all the thoughts which we have. To say that our senses assure us, with the utmost evidence that matter exists, is not proving it. Our senses deceive us with respect to all the corporeal qualities, not excepting the magnitude, figure, and motion of bodies, and when we believe them, we are persuaded that out of our mind there exists a great number of colours, savours, and other beings, which we call hardness, fluidity, cold, heat, etc, yet it is not true that any such thing exists out of our mind. Why then should we rely on our senses with respect to extension? It may very well be reduced to appearance in like manner with colors.<sup>19</sup>

Bayle then went on to cite passages from Malebranche and Fardella in support of this thesis, and as evidence that the Cartesian proof of the existence of an external world is invalid. Next Arnauld's objections to Malebranche were considered in which Arnauld charged Malebranche with holding "some extravagant propositions, which strictly taken, tend to the establishment of a very dangerous Pyrrhonism."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 612.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 614.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 615.

These three passages in Bayle present a basis for a scepticism which denies both the reality of sensible objects, that is, the independent existence of sense objects, and also the reality of the sort of real objects posited by the "new" philosophies of Descartes and Locke, that is, objects consisting of primary qualities. All qualities, whether primary or secondary are reduced to the status of appearances or modifications of the soul. A world of real objects which produces the world of appearances is unknown, and possibly unknowable. There is no rational evidence for the existence of an independent reality.

This presentation of Bayle's was apparently intended to offer a new version of Pyrrhonian scepticism, developed from the arguments of the seventeenth century rationalists. An earlier version had appeared in the writings of Montaigne and Gassendi, based on the classical statement of Pyrrhonism of Sextus Empiricus. In these presentations, the Pyrrhonist was said to believe that only appearances were known, that we had no means of discovering the nature of reality, and that all that was known was only an affection of the mind.<sup>21</sup> Rationalists like Descartes had tried to found their certitude about the nature of the real world on the basis of this new Pyrrhonian theory about appearances, by introducing the distinction between primary and secondary qualities; real qualities of real objects and apparent qualities of unreal objects. The "new" philosophy was thoroughly in keeping with seventeenth century Pyrrhonism about secondary qualities, and employed many of the stock Pyrrhonian arguments from the ten tropes of classical Pyrrhonism to defend this denial of the reality of secondary qualities. The "new" philosophy was opposed to what Hume later called "the most extravagant scepticism," the view that there is nothing that can be said of real object with continued

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, Book I, chaps. x-xi, and Book II, chaps. v-vii, especially par. 72; Michel de Montaigne, "Apology for Raimond Sebond," in *The Essays of Montaigne*, translated by E. J. Trechmann, (New York and London, n.d.), Vol. II, pp. 16-7 and 45-50; and Petrus Gassendi, *Syntagma philosophicum, De Logicae fine*, Caput III, "Modi Epoches Scepticorum circa Veritatem, ipsiusque Criteria", in *Opera*, Vol. I, (Lyon 1658).

Seventeenth century Pyrrhonism is a movement that has been almost completely neglected.

and independent existence outside of our minds,<sup>22</sup> since this "new" doctrine always maintained that there was a real external world composed of objects possessing primary qualities.

Bayle's novel presentation of seventeenth century Pyrrhonism is original mainly in that the great sceptic had made all the "new" philosophers his allies in Pyrrhonism. The same sort of sceptical arguments that they accepted about secondary qualities applied to the allegedly real primary qualities as well, and hence the "new" philosophy, in spite of all its brave attempts was just a disguised form of that most extravagant scepticism — Pyrrhonism.<sup>23</sup>

Malebranche, Fardella, Lannion, and others had already shown that there were grave difficulties in the Cartesian attempt to establish a demonstration of the existence of a real physical world. However, they had not been willing to accept the sceptical conclusion. Bayle, armed not only with their arguments, but also with his great discovery of the equal ontological status of primary and secondary qualities, was ready to herald and propound the triumph of seventeenth century Pyrrhonism, that no external reality can be known, and that all that we know is only a set of modifications of our own mind.

Bayle had succeeded in showing that those who denied the reality of sensible things were really complete Pyrrhonists, since once the objects of our perception are denied any reality, the alleged real world of primary qualities is also denied and destroyed.

I believe it can be shown in two ways that Bayle's type of Pyrrhonism was what Berkeley had in mind when he set out to refute the sceptics: (1) by examining Berkeley's refutation.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Selby-Bigge edition, (Oxford 1949), pp. 214 and 228. Arnauld, in *La Logique ou l'Art de Penser* treated this doubt of whether a real world exists as one of the more fantastic features of Pyrrhonism. See the 1724 edition, pp. xx-xxi.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Francisque Bouillier, *Histoire de la Philosophie Cartésienne*, third edition, Vol. II, (Paris 1868), p. 487; François Picavet, "Bayle," in *La Grande Encyclopédie*, Vol. V, (Paris 1888), p. 951; Jean Delvolvé, *Religion, Critique et Philosophie Positive chez Pierre Bayle*, (Paris 1906), pp. 252-3 and 256; and F. Pillon, "Le Scepticisme de Bayle", *L'Année Philosophique*, VI (1895), pp. 193-4.

and (2) by producing evidence that Berkeley had knowledge of, and was aroused by, Bayle's scepticism.

One of Berkeley's themes in the *Philosophical Commentaries*, *Principles*, and *Dialogues* is that he has discovered the source of scepticism, and can show us how to avoid falling into such an horrendous view. His own position he presents as that one which is farthest from scepticism.<sup>24</sup> The sceptics doubt that we can know if anything really exists. All we can ever be acquainted with are appearances, which are, "in the mind." Berkeley claims to have found the basis for this extravagant theory in the distinction between appearances and real objects, or between what is perceived and what exists. And finally, Berkeley tries to show us that all philosophers who believe in the absolute existence of matter will be reduced to scepticism, since their views are always based on such a distinction.

At the beginning of the third dialogue between Hylas and Philonous, Berkeley presents us with the picture of the man who has arrived at "la crise pyrrhonienne." Hylas starts the discussion with a pitiful picture of the limits of human knowledge. He is "plunged into the deepest and most deplorable scepticism that ever man was."<sup>25</sup> Hylas informs Philonous that we can know of nothing in this world, we can know naught of the real nature of things, not even if real objects exist. As far as we can tell it is impossible for real objects to exist in Nature. All that we are ever acquainted with are ideas or appearances in our own minds, and no real object could exist with the qualities that we perceive in the appearances.<sup>26</sup>

The dangers of falling into the sort of sceptical despair in which we find poor Hylas are that it is a flagrant violation of our ordinary commonsensical views and practices, and that it paves the way of doubt of the principles of religion. The normal members of the human race have no sceptical doubts of the real existence of the objects they perceive. Every sane man would consider a sceptical view like Hylas's as ridiculous.<sup>27</sup> Thus the

<sup>24</sup> Berkeley, *Principles*, par. 40, p. 57.

<sup>25</sup> *Dialogues*, p. 229.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 227-8.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 172, 211, 229, 237 and 246.



philosopher who ends as a sceptic is making a farce of his profession by spending his life "in doubting of those things which other men evidently know, and believing those things which they laugh at, and despise."<sup>28</sup> If philosophy is to be more than a useless comedy it must return to the views of the vulgar, and reject as absurd any view that ordinary mortals could not possibly believe. Otherwise, Berkeley believes, philosophy will have no contribution to make to the actual life of man.<sup>29</sup>

In addition there is the danger that the sceptic who doubts if anything exists will lead people to doubt the principles of true religion. When people see the most learned men professing an ignorance of everything, or advancing absurd theories, this may lead to a suspicion that the most sacred and important truths are dubitable. The same sort of reasoning that has ended in scepticism has also led to atheism.<sup>30</sup>

The error on which scepticism is always based, Berkeley claims, is the distinction between ideas and things, between *percipi* and *esse*. It is this which leads the sceptic to declare that the absolute existence of any object apart from the mind is unknowable.

All this scepticism follows, from our supposing a difference between *things* and *ideas*, and that the former have a subsistence without the mind, or unperceived. It were easy to dilate on the subject; and show how the arguments urged by *sceptics* in all ages, depend on the supposition of external objects.

So long as we attribute a real existence to unthinking things, distinct from their being perceived, it is not only impossible for us to know with evidence the nature of any real unthinking being, but even that it exists. Hence, it is, that we see philosophers distrust their senses, and doubt of the existence of heaven and earth, of every thing they see or feel, even of their own bodies.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface, p. 167.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, *ibid.*, Preface, pp. 167-8.

<sup>30</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 171-2, and *Principles*, pars. 92-3, pp. 81-2.

In Baxter, *op. cit.*, the author, who interprets Berkeley as a sceptic, feels that one main reason for refuting him is that scepticism leads to irreligion. Cf. pp. 280 and 293.

<sup>31</sup> *Principles*, pars. 87-8, p. 79. See also par. 86, p. 78, par. 92, p. 81, par. 101, p. 85; *Dialogues*, pp. 228-9, 246, and 258; and *Philosophical Commentaries*, entry 606, p. 75. The latter states, "The supposition that things are distinct from Ideas takes away all real Truth, & consequently brings in Universal Scepticism, since all our knowledge & contemplation is confin'd barely to our Ideas."

Berkeley's point here is that the classical Pyrrhonian arguments about illusions, the round tower, the bent oar, the pigeon's neck, etc. are decisive if ideas are distinguished from things. Our ideas vary, and if the variations are attributed to an external reality, contradictions follow. Our ideas are the only things we know, hence we cannot tell what things are like, or if they exist.<sup>32</sup>

All of modern philosophy, from Descartes to Locke and Malebranche, reduces to scepticism. This does not mean that modern philosophy is sceptical, since Berkeley is well aware that Descartes, Locke and Malebranche all hold that an unperceived external world of things exists. They all deny the reality of sensible things, but maintain that a real corporeal world of objects composed of primary qualities actually exists. However, the distinction between primary and secondary qualities is untenable, and besides not a shred of evidence or meaning can be given to the contention that an unperceived corporeal world exists. Thus, in spite of the titanic efforts of Descartes, Locke and Malebranche to support their denial of the existence of sensible qualities without advocating the Pyrrhonian doubt if anything exists, by means of appealing to God's perfection, a *je ne sais quoi*, or the authority of Scriptural revelation, they are all turned into advocates of Pyrrhonism.

This transformation of dogmatists into sceptics is accomplished not by sleight-of-hand, but by Berkeley's appealing to Baylean type arguments about primary qualities, and Malebranchian type attacks on Descartes' proof of the existence of an external world. Besides contending that no one has an abstract general idea of primary qualities, Berkeley attempts to show that the same type of sceptical arguments about the variability of appearances that have led all modern philosophers to deny the real existence of secondary qualities, will lead them to deny the reality of primary ones. Figures, extension, solidities and motions all vary according to our state and circumstances. Things appear large to a mite which can hardly be seen at all by us, objects appear to be moving to one observer, and to be stationary to another, etc. "In short, let anyone consider those arguments, which are thought manifestly to

<sup>32</sup> See *Dialogues*, pp. 174-207, and p. 258.

prove that colours and tastes exist only in the mind, and he shall find they may with equal force, be brought to prove the same thing of extension, figure and motion."<sup>33</sup>

Hence, as Bayle had already pointed out, the "new" philosophy, in building on the Pyrrhonian arguments about secondary qualities, would be forced into an unholy alliance with the sceptics on the status of primary qualities. Everything would become only appearance.

To show that there is no evidence or meaning to the claim that material substance exists, Berkeley develops the thesis that matter is undefinable and the contention of Malebranche and Bayle that there is no demonstration of the existence of matter. To show that we can have no idea of matter, Berkeley first appeals to the fact that material substance conceived of as a substratum supporting qualities and causing our perceptions makes no sense if primary qualities have been shown to be mental in the same sense as secondary ones. How can matter "support" extension if it cannot be extended (because extension is "in the mind, too")? How can matter cause perceptions if it does not move (since motion is "in the mind")? Thus, the Baylean claim that there is no difference in ontological status between primary and secondary qualities destroys the conception of matter of the new philosophy. Further, since matter is not perceived, we know nothing of it.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, Berkeley shows that we cannot know of an external material reality by reason. Here he builds on the type of argument of Malebranche and Bayle that the existence of matter is not demonstrable. From this, Berkeley goes on to point out that there is no classification into which matter falls, neither accident, occasion, instrument, etc.<sup>35</sup> When Hylas

<sup>33</sup> *Principles*, par. 15, p. 47. See also the first *Dialogue*, pp. 188-92, and *Principles*, pars. 10-14, pp. 45-7.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *Principles*, pars. 16-18, pp. 47-8, and *Dialogues*, pp. 198 and 215-7.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Principles*, pars. 18-20, pp. 48-9, and *Dialogues*, pp. 217-225. See also Nicolas Malebranche, *De la Recherche de la Vérité*, edited by Geneviève Lewis, (Paris 1945), III, *Éclaircissement* vi, pp. 24-33; Nicolas Malebranche, *Dialogues on Metaphysics and Religion*, translated by Morris Ginsberg, (New York 1923), I, v, pp. 75-7, and VI, v-vi, pp. 167-8; and Pierre Bayle, *Dictionary*, art. *Pyrrho*, Remark B, and art. *Zeno*, Remarks G and H.

says that all this does not prove the impossibility of matter's existence, Philonous replies sharply. "You are not therefore to expect I should prove a repugnancy between ideas where there are no ideas; or the impossibility of matter taken in an *unknown* sense, that is no sense at all. My business was only to shew, you meant *nothing*; and this you were brought to own. So that in all your various senses, you have been shewed either to mean nothing at all, or if anything, an absurdity. And if this be not sufficient to prove the impossibility of a thing, I desire you will let me know what is."<sup>36</sup>

At this point the sceptic seems to have triumphed in casting in doubt the view that a real world exists. Once a distinction has been made between appearance and reality, the Pyrrhonist is able to conquer all by showing that anything that we ever come to know is appearance. Rather than trying, as his predecessors did, to stem the onrushing tide of Pyrrhonism by stoutly defending an unperceived reality as a last bulwark against the menace of scepticism, Berkeley follows the sage political advice of our day, "if you can't beat them, join them." After joining forces with the Pyrrhonists, Berkeley is able to show that their attack is innocuous if *esse est percipi*. The others who tried to oppose scepticism by denying the reality of sensible things have been captured by the sceptics.

In order to accomplish this revolution from within, of changing the Pyrrhonian denial of the reality of anything into an affirmation of the reality of the entire sensible universe, Berkeley merely places together two views, one of the vulgar and the other of the seventeenth century Pyrrhonists which the new philosophers had accepted — "the former being of opinion that *those things they immediately perceive are the real things*; and the latter, that *the things immediately perceived, are ideas which exist only in the mind*. Which two notions put together, do in effect constitute the substance of what I advance."<sup>37</sup> Once Berkeley's criterion of reality is joined to the sceptic's thesis, the latter is completely overturned, and a common-sensical realism results.<sup>38</sup> And from this Berkeley derives, by

<sup>36</sup> *Dialogues*, p. 226.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>38</sup> That Berkeley's theory is a defense of common sense realism has been most forcefully pointed out in F. J. E. Woodbridge's essay, "Berkeley's

means of his causal theory of perception, his entire theory of immaterialism.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, the sceptical overthrowing of the believers in material substance is only half of the tale. Once the unseen material world is removed, then we can find the real world right before us where previous philosophers had simply failed to look. The world of sensible things really exists, even though the sceptics have shown that it is only in the mind. The world of appearance is the world of reality. And thus Berkeley can say in triumph in his notebooks, "I am more for reality than any other Philosophers, they make a thousand doubts and know not certainly but we may be deceiv'd. I assert the direct contrary," and "In y<sup>e</sup> immaterial hypothesis, the wall is white, fire hot, etc."<sup>40</sup> Only Berkeley with his insistence that the world of appearance is the real world could defend common sense realism and challenge Pyrrhonism on its own battlefield, the world of sensible things. Only Berkeley could accept the sceptical arguments and not their nihilistic conclusions and thus overcome "la crise pyrrhonienne." In this way Berkeley overturns the arguments from illusion or variety of experience. Berkeley sees that the Pyrrhoniam tropes are only forceful if one assumes a real world apart from sensation. If, instead, one adopts the view that *esse est percipi*, then there are no examples of sense illusions. The only possibility of error with regard to perception is the inference that is drawn from experience. The experiences of the bent rod or the tower that is round at a distance are not illusory experiences, but sensible things. If we infer from these experiences that we will perceive other sensible things, then we may make an incorrect inference. In this manner, what was traditionally the strongest part of Pyrrhonism is rendered harmless by Berkeley's revolution within the citadel of Pyrrhonism.<sup>41</sup>

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Realism," in *Studies in the History of Ideas*, Vol. I, edited by the Department of Philosophy, Columbia University, (New York 1918), pp. 188-215.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, *Dialogues*, pp. 211 ff.

<sup>40</sup> *Philosophical Commentaries*, entry 517a, p. 64, and entry 19, p. 10. See also *Principles*, pars. 3-4, p. 42, pars. 34-5, p. 55 and par. 40, p. 57; *Dialogues*, pp. 229-30, 237-8, 244, 249, 260 and 262; and *Philosophical Commentaries*, entry 305, p. 38.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *Dialogues*, p. 238.

The secret of this conquest of scepticism, Berkeley is always willing to admit, is the examination of the nature of existence. All previous philosophers, sceptical or otherwise, distinguished things and ideas, *esse* and *percipi*. Hence when the sceptics showed that sensible things were ideas, this appeared to be a devastating result. However, once we understand that *esse est percipi*, Berkeley claimed no sceptical objections can be dangerous. Thus he could make his remark in his notebooks,

Mem: Diligently to set forth how that many of the Ancient philosophers run into so great absurdity as even to deny the existence of motion and those other things they perceiv'd actually by their senses, this sprung from their not knowing w<sup>t</sup> existence was and wherein it consisted this is the source of all their Folly, 'tis on the discovering of the nature & meaning & import of existence that I chiefly insist. This puts a wide difference between the Sceptics & me. This I think wholly new. I am sure 'tis new to me.<sup>42</sup>

This discovery of the source of the strength of seventeenth century Pyrrhonism, I believe, follows out of the discoveries of Bayle and Malebranche. All modern philosophers prior to Berkeley had fallen into the sceptic's trap, and had distinguished appearance from reality. Berkeley alone had been able to accept the sceptics at their word and still offer a theory of the reality of sensible things. Descartes, Locke, and Malebranche had all reduced the sensible world to appearance and had struggled valiantly, albeit unsuccessfully, to defend a theory of the real existence of a material world. Berkeley had refused to follow their lead after seeing that the Baylean and Malebranchian type of analysis reduced such attempts to scepticism. Instead Berkeley chose to turn the Baylean type of Pyrrhonism inside out, and use it to defend the reality of sensible things, rather than of an unperceived material substance. Bayle had shown that we only know the existence of sensible things. This, Berkeley showed, was knowing the existence of a real world. This dialectical victory over Pyrrhonism is neatly put in the closing passages of the *Dialogues*. Hylas says, "You set out upon the same principles that Academics, Cartesians, and the like sects, usually do; and for a long time it looked as if you were advancing their philosophical scepticism; but in the end your conclusions are directly opposite to theirs."

<sup>42</sup> *Philosophical Commentaries*, entry 491, pp. 61-2.



Philonous replies in his closing speech, "You see, Hylas, the water of yonder fountain, how it is forced upwards, in a round column, to a certain height; at which it breaks and falls back into the basin from whence it rose: to ascent as well as descent, proceeding from the same uniform law or principle of *gravitation*. Just so, the same principles which at first view lead to *scepticism*, pursued to a certain point, bring men back to common sense."<sup>43</sup>

Descartes had accepted a partial Pyrrhonism, a denial of the reality of sensible things, to defend his view of the true nature of things. Bayle, employing his discovery about primary qualities and Malebranche's view about the evidence for the existence of a material world, had unleashed a new "crise pyrrhonienne" by showing that this partial Pyrrhonism quickly becomes a complete scepticism, a denial of all reality. Berkeley with his new principle was able to overcome the crisis by following Bayle to a certain point and then adding a new ending to the sceptic's tale.

Seeing Berkeley in relation to Pyrrhonism also aids in observing the originality of his metaphysics. In his *Berkeley and Malebranche*,<sup>44</sup> A. A. Luce defends the originality of Berkeley's immaterialism, maintaining that such a view was not "in the air" at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but that materialism was. This view has been attacked recently by Anita D. Fritz, in her article, "Malebranche and the Immaterialism of Berkeley,"<sup>45</sup> her main argument being that Malebranche's principles logically imply an immaterialist theory, which was developed by Berkeley. In terms of the interpretation of Berkeley's views on scepticism that I have been presenting in this paper, I think a more precise delineation of Berkeley's originality can be given. At the beginning of the eighteenth century two types of theories were current, one advocating that some sort of material reality existed (Descartes, Locke, and Malebranche), the other doubting if anything outside the mind really existed (Baylean Pyrrhonism). Malebranche's

<sup>43</sup> *Dialogues*, pp. 262-3.

<sup>44</sup> A. A. Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche*, (London 1934), pp. 47-8.

<sup>45</sup> Anita Dunlevy Fritz, "Malebranche and the Immaterialism of Berkeley," *Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. III (1949-50), pp. 59-80.

"seeing all things in God" tended in the direction of ignoring rather than denying materialism, and making the real world one of essences in God's Mind. Berkeley's immaterialism is a radical innovation in this battle of ideas, based on the Malebranchian theory that God's Mind is the source of all that exists, and the Pyrrhonian insistence that we only know appearances. The innovation is that the real world, produced and sustained by some spiritual substance or substances, is the world of appearance. Though Berkeley and Malebranche might agree that the source of all was immaterial, and that only spirit can be efficacious in this universe, they would never agree on the status of appearance. Malebranche's *esse est concepi* is from another universe than Berkeley's *esse est percipi*. The immaterialism Malebranche was tending to was one of essences supported by Spirit, while Berkeley pictured a world of appearances supported by Spirit. Malebranche saw reality as radically different from appearance, and hence relegated appearances to being mere "modifications of the soul" unlike the real natures that existed in God's Mind. Berkeley refused to give up the Pyrrhonian thesis that all we can ever know is appearance, and in offering a foundation for appearance, offers one that makes appearance real, not unreal. In his notebooks, Berkeley insists that he, unlike Malebranche, has no doubts of the existence of bodies.<sup>46</sup> Malebranche's doctrines may lead

<sup>46</sup> *Philosophical Commentaries*, entry 686a, p. 84, and entries 800-1, p. 96. In connection with this difference between the views of Berkeley and Malebranche, and what I claim is the originality of the former, some mention must be made of the thesis of John Wild concerning the nature of Berkeley's philosophy. Professor Wild, in his interesting work, *George Berkeley*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), attempted to show that Berkeley's philosophical career represented the development of a "concrete logic," which discarded abstractions, and fragmentary pictures of reality, and pointed to a transcendental reality towards which reason was constantly groping. In this interpretation the *Siris* is seen as the culmination of the Neo-Platonic or Hegelian philosophy which Berkeley was creating through his dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the philosophy of the times.

It is impossible in the scope of this paper to do justice to Wild's views, but in terms of my contention regarding Berkeley's relation to Pyrrhonism, I think that Wild's interpretation gives too little importance to Berkeley's major contribution to the seventeenth and eighteenth century war against Pyrrhonism. Rather than applying a "concrete logic" to the issue, Berkeley advanced a common-sense realism, and came out with the

logically to a type of immaterialism, but certainly not to Berkeley's, since the former is still in the Pyrrhonian trap of distinguishing the real from the perceived. The uniqueness of Berkeley's immaterialism is that it provides a basis for the Pyrrhonian world of appearances in the mind.

Reading Berkeley as a challenge to Bayle's Pyrrhonism gives some basis for Berkeley's claim to being the refuter of scepticism. If the passages that I quoted from Bayle's *Dictionary* were known to Berkeley, they might have led him to see that Bayle's monumental discovery about primary qualities and Malebranche and Bayle's destruction of the arguments to prove that a real external world exists, meant that if one denied the reality of sensible things, the reality of all things would follow therefrom. Hence Descartes, Locke and Malebranche would be forced into scepticism. And this in turn might have led to Berkeley's analysis of the sources of scepticism, and his discovery of the new principle by which he escaped the Pyrrhonian conclusion.

When one comes to proving historically that this is what happened, one finds that there is much evidence to make this probable, if not certain. Two great experts on Berkeley, A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, have examined the evidence that links Bayle and Berkeley and have apparently come to a growing recognition that it is more than probable that there was a direct connection between Bayle's *Dictionary* and Berkeley's philosophy. In his *Berkeley and Malebranche*, published in 1934, A. A. Luce pointed out that a copy of Bayle's *Dictionary* was sold at the auction of Berkeley's library; Luce said that "I

startling discovery that in this way the Pyrrhonian arguments could be accepted and rendered innocuous. The Malebranchian philosophy, by rejecting such a realism, could never defeat the sceptical menace. Berkeley certainly deserves recognition for offering this new way out of some of the basic difficulties of modern philosophy.

Berkeley's views about the nature of the reality behind the common-sense world, or on which the common-sense world depended, may have led him on to his later views in the *Siris*. This however does not destroy or detract from the initial originality of the *Principles* and the *Dialogues*. Regardless of what Berkeley's views may have later become, or how his later views may be related ones, one of his main contributions to eighteenth century philosophy was his new way of dealing with old problems through admitting the force of scepticism, and then showing the harmlessness of the attack if the sense world is the real world.

suspect that Bayle exerted considerable influence upon Berkeley, but I cannot prove it."<sup>47</sup> After discussing some of the evidence, Luce concluded his discussion of Bayle by suggesting that Bayle was probably one of Berkeley's important sources ranking next in importance after Malebranche and Locke.<sup>48</sup> In 1944, Luce stated in a note to his edition of the *Philosophical Commentaries* that Berkeley was probably influenced by Bayle, especially by the articles on Pyrrho and Zeno.<sup>49</sup> More recently in his notes to the *Philosophical Commentaries* in a different edition, Luce states categorically that Bayle's *Dictionary*, and especially the articles on Pyrrho and Zeno "had considerable influence on Berkeley's thought."<sup>50</sup> No reason is offered for coming to this definite conclusion of the matter. Jessop, in his notes to the *Principles*, suggests three places where Berkeley may have been influenced by Bayle's articles on Pyrrho and Zeno.<sup>51</sup>

What evidence there is supports Luce's more definite stand on the matter. As far as I know, Berkeley mentions Bayle only three times in his writings. There are two almost identical references to Bayle in the *Philosophical Commentaries*, entries 358 and 424, which read, "Malebranche's & Bayle's arguments do not seem to prove against Space, but onely Bodies," and "Bayle's Malebranche's etc. arguments do not seem to prove against space, but only against Bodies."<sup>52</sup> In *The Theory of Vision Vindicated*, Bayle is referred to along with Hobbes, Leibniz and Spinoza as a dangerous enemy of religion.<sup>53</sup> This last reference is of little value here since it appears in a work written long after the *Principles* and the *Dialogues*. It does suggest however that Berkeley had Bayle in

<sup>47</sup> Luce, *Berkeley and Malebranche*, p. 53.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>49</sup> George Berkeley, *Philosophical Commentaries*, edited by A. A. Luce, (London 1944), note to entry 358, p. 388.

<sup>50</sup> *Philosophical Commentaries*, in *Works of Berkeley*, Vol. I, note to entry 358, p. 122.

<sup>51</sup> *Principles*, notes on pp. 44, 76, and 95.

<sup>52</sup> *Philosophical Commentaries*, pp. 43 and 53.

<sup>53</sup> George Berkeley, *The Theory of Vision Vindicated*, in *Works*, Vol. I, p. 254. Luce hints in *Berkeley and Malebranche* that Bayle's anti-religious views may be responsible for the almost complete omission of Bayle's name in Berkeley's writings.

mind when he listed as one of the dangers of scepticism that it lead to a denial of the principles of religion.

The two entries in the *Philosophical Commentaries* can easily be read as references to Bayle's discussion in the Pyrrho and Zeno articles, in which case the coupling of the names of Bayle and Malebranche would make sense, since Bayle introduces Malebranche's arguments in both articles.<sup>54</sup> Also, in the Zeno article the discussion starts off with Zeno's arguments about space, before it arrives at a discussion of the status of primary qualities and the existence of bodies and the arguments of Bayle and Malebranche there relate only to bodies and not to space.

Further evidence in the *Philosophical Commentaries* that Berkeley had read Bayle's articles on Pyrrho and Zeno can be found in entry 79 referring to Fardella, and many of the entries on infinite divisibility, e.g. number 26. Besides the few entries that seem almost certainly to refer to Bayle's articles, there are a tremendous number that are in agreement with Bayle's text. The Fardella entry states "Mem. that I take notice that I do not fall in w<sup>th</sup> Sceptics Fardella, etc., in y<sup>t</sup> I make bodies to exist certainly, w<sup>ch</sup> they doubt of."<sup>55</sup> There is no evidence that Berkeley read Fardella, and he is quoted in Bayle's article on Zeno, Remark H, in a context that could lead to his being coupled with sceptics.<sup>56</sup> As to infinite divisibility, almost all of Berkeley's arguments on the subject appear in Bayle's article on Zeno. In entry 26 Berkeley connects the problem of infinite divisibility with the problem of external existence, just as Bayle does in the Zeno article.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> In Mrs. Fritz's article, "Malebranche and the Immaterialism of Berkeley," it is suggested that Berkeley is referring to Bayle's *Recueil de Quelques Pièces Curieuses Concernant la Philosophie de Monsieur Descartes*. See Fritz, *op. cit.*, p. 77. However I think this is unlikely since Bayle's interest in that work is in the religious opposition to Descartes, and Bayle makes no arguments there to which Berkeley's remarks are appropriate.

<sup>55</sup> *Philosophical Commentaries*, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> Bayle, *Dictionary*, Vol. V, p. 614.

<sup>57</sup> *Philosophical Commentaries*, p. 10, and Luce's note in his 1944 edition of the *Philosophical Commentaries* to entries 26 and 258, pp. 325 and 388.

The last piece of direct evidence linking Bayle and Berkeley is one that neither Luce nor Jessop seems to have noticed, that is that the same type of illustrations are used by both Bayle and Berkeley on the primary quality issue. In showing the extension of things varies as color does both philosophers appeal to what objects will look like to tiny animals, flies or mites, and how objects appear under magnification. They also both appeal to the change in size and shape of objects as we change position.<sup>58</sup> It might be a coincidence that Bayle and Berkeley discovered the same fact about primary qualities, but it could hardly be a coincidence that they used the same type of illustrations to prove their case.

Thus, considering the popularity of Bayle's *Dictionary*, the fact that a copy was auctioned off from Berkeley's library, the two references in the notebooks to Bayle, the mention of Fardella in the notebooks, the same arguments about infinite divisibility in the notebooks, and the Zeno article, the same theory about primary qualities, and the similarity of illustrations on the matter, I think that we have more than just probable evidence of a historical connection between Berkeley's philosophy and Bayle's *Dictionary*.

As a last bit of evidence in support of interpreting Berkeley as an antagonist of Baylean Pyrrhonism, I should like to appeal to the way it was read by Andrew Baxter and Thomas Reid. Baxter sees Berkeley as a terrible Pyrrhonist, in a class with Bayle or Pyrrho. Berkeley's type of reasoning in denying the material world would lead in turn to denying the spiritual world too, and thus to complete Pyrrhonism. Berkeley's attempt to refute scepticism only leads to the "wildest and unbounded scepticism." Baxter treats Berkeley's view as being a denial that there is a real world anywhere, and such a view he places in the Pyrrhonian tradition. Thus Baxter considers that Berkeley's scepticism is no antidote but actually a worse form of the disease. He says of Berkeley's claim to have refuted scepticism, "This is, I think, as if one should advance, that the best way for a woman to silence those who may attack her reputation, is to turn a common prostitute. He puts us into a way of denying

<sup>58</sup> Bayle, *Dictionary*, art. Zeno, remark G, Vol. V, p. 612; and *Dialogues*, pp. 188-9.



all things, that we may get rid of the absurdity of those who deny some things." <sup>59</sup> Throughout his answer to Berkeley, Baxter keeps developing the relation of Pyrrhonism to modern philosophy, and placing Berkeley in the absurd position of the man who tried to answer Pyrrhonism by advocating it. <sup>60</sup>

Reid is careful never to accuse Berkeley of being a sceptic like Hume, but treats him as the first to see that the systems of Descartes and Locke lead to scepticism, and that this may be avoided by eliminating the material world from the system. Unfortunately, Reid observes, Hume showed that Berkeley's system, in spite of all attempts to avoid it, led to scepticism too. So that Reid sees Berkeley's historical role in the collapse of the Cartesian type of philosophy as one who saw that it was tending to scepticism, and who thought he could avoid it by his immaterialism. <sup>61</sup>

Thus both of these readings, Baxter's and Reid's, place Berkeley in the context of an opponent of the sceptical tendencies in modern philosophy, and both of these see him, unfor-

<sup>59</sup> Baxter, *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*, Vol. II, p. 284. The discussion of Berkeley occurs in Section II, pp. 256-344.

<sup>60</sup> A somewhat similar point is made in James Beattie's *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism*, in *Essays*, (Edinburgh 1776), Part II, chap. ii, sec. 2, pp. 187-9.

Also, in Jean Pierre de Crousaz's *Examen du Pyrrhonisme*, (La Haye 1733), p. 97, and *A New Treatise of the Art of Thinking*, (London 1724), Vol. I, p. 42. Berkeley was apparently alluded to by the remark: "Un auteur moderne prétend renverser le Pyrrhonisme, en niant l'Existence des Corps, & n'admettant que celle des Esprits." This view is then shown to be fantastic and unbelievable.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Thomas Reid, *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, I, v and vii, and VII; and Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, II, 10-11. It is interesting to note what Hume says of Berkeley in a footnote after stating Berkeley's argument against abstract general ideas. "This argument is drawn from Dr. Berkeley; and indeed most of the writings of that very ingenious author form the best lessons of scepticism, which are to be found either among the ancient or modern philosophers, Bayle not excepted. He professes, however, in his title-page (and undoubtedly with great truth) to have composed his book against the sceptics as well as against the atheists and free-thinkers. But that all his arguments, though otherwise intended, are, in reality, merely sceptical, appears from this, *that they admit of no answer and produce no conviction*. Their only effect is to cause that momentary amazement and irresolution and confusion, which is the result of scepticism." David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section XII, Part. I, Open Court edition, p. 173n.

unately, plunging headlong into the greatest of all sceptical debacles.

The contention of this paper is, then, that Berkeley set out to refute scepticism because of "la crise pyrrhonienne" that Bayle had just brought to light. Bayle, like his later follower, Hume, had turned the whole enterprise of modern philosophy into a new Pyrrhonism — a doubting of the real existence of everything, and an asserting that all that we could ever be acquainted with were mental appearances. This Baylean type of Pyrrhonism was in flagrant violation of common sense, and led, even in the hands of its creator, to free thought and doubt of Christian principles. Berkeley saw, as Reid later did too, that this type of Pyrrhonian scepticism reaches its disastrous conclusions through a distinction between the real and the perceived. The Pyrrhonian contention that all that we ever came in contact with was a set of appearances in the mind, Berkeley believed, was undeniable. But one could avoid the horrendous consequence of this by a new theory of the nature of reality. The theory of the "new" philosophers, that real objects were constituted of primary qualities, was shown to be untenable by Bayle's argument. Their contention that a world of reality was inferable from the world of appearances was shown to be untenable by Malebranche's, Fardella's and Bayle's arguments. Hence the sceptical challenge had to be met by a new theory of reality — the world of appearance is the real world. This thesis coupled with the theory of immaterialism to explain the cause and status of the world of appearance, would provide a new foundation for human knowledge. Baylean Pyrrhonism destroyed the world of the seventeenth century philosophers. Berkeley tried to construct a new world out of Baylean Pyrrhonism, with scepticism paving the way of truth. Unfortunately, Hume turned the sceptical attack against the new realism of Berkeley and reduced it again to Pyrrhonism, and Reid followed once again with an attempt to find a more material reality safe from the attacks of the sceptics.

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**Critical Studies**

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF P. D. OUSPENSKY**

The recent publication of a third posthumous work of P. D. Ouspensky provides an occasion for reviewing the teaching of an original philosophical thinker who has received little notice from academic philosophers.

I

**LIFE**

Peter Demianovich Ouspensky was born in Moscow in 1878. After graduating from the University of Moscow, where he majored in science, he became a journalist in that city. He later recalled as a turning-point in his life an incident at the age of 29 when, in revulsion against an assignment to write a favorable editorial about what he considered the futile Hague Conference, he turned to his collection of occult literature and, glancing through these books which, while "very naive," yet, unlike the "bare and arid desert" of positivism, "lead somewhere," he grasped what became the leading principle of his philosophy, the idea that the fourth dimension is the key to the mysteries of the world. In the conviction that there must be some truth behind the persistent tradition of esoteric schools still existing in the East, he started on what was intended to be an extensive oriental trip in search, as he put it, "of the miraculous." These travels were interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War, which compelled him to return to Moscow, where he engaged in journalism, lecturing, and writing. In 1915 he made the acquaintance of the Caucasian occultist George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff, and soon came completely under the spell of that teacher's odd but apparently fascinating personality. The Communist Revolution, which Ouspensky considered the catastrophic "end of Russian history," forced him into exile, first in southern Russia, then at Gurdjieff's home in the Caucasus, where, with other disciples, he rejoined the

master to continue training in physical and mental exercises intended to develop psychic powers. In 1921 he settled in London. For a while he maintained his association with Gurdjieff, who had established a school at Fontainebleau, but in 1924 he announced to his students that thereafter his own work would proceed independently. He continued to teach and write in England until his death in 1947.

## II

### WORKS

Five books by Ouspensky have appeared in English: a system of philosophy: *Tertium Organum*; a collection of essays: *A New Model of the Universe*; a novel: *Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*; an autobiography: *In Search of the Miraculous*; and a course of lectures: *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution*.

*Tertium Organum*, published in Russian in 1912, is the most interesting and important of these works. The title is explained as meaning that the book is about "the third canon of thought," namely the mystical, which has always existed, although for us moderns it appears as a third method after the deductive and inductive methods described by Aristotle and Bacon. The English translation by Nicholas Bessaraboff and Claude Bragdon was published by Manas Press in 1920, and again, revised, by Knopf in 1922. The simplicity of the literary style, the short sentences and paragraphs, and the clarity with which subtle arguments are developed show the influence of the author's training as a journalist (and make one wish that all philosophers were required to serve an apprenticeship in newspaper writing). In content *Tertium Organum* is a systematic treatise on epistemology. The first seven chapters are an objective survey of the physical world. The author considers that the most basic problem of physics is why space has just three dimensions, and he concludes that it is impossible to find any answer to this question in an objective study of the world of space and time. Consequently, taking as a clue

Kant's thesis that space and time are forms of intuition, and inferring from this that "we bear within ourselves the conditions of our space," he approaches the problem subjectively. In the following chapters he endeavors to show how our mode of consciousness makes space three-dimensional, how other modes of consciousness would, and for other beings do, make it of fewer or more dimensions, and how these different spaces are related to each other. The next to last chapter is a collection of selections from mystical literature, with comments, and the concluding chapter considers the "cosmic consciousness" with has for its object a world of four dimensions. An appendix gives a table showing the space and time sense, psychology, logic, mathematics, forms of action, morals, forms of consciousness, forms of knowledge, and forms of science characteristic of, as well as the different beings characterized by, four "forms of the manifestation of consciousness."

*A New Model of the Universe*, written and revised at various times between 1905 and 1929, was translated into English by R. R. Merton and published by Knopf in 1931. While it has the same lucid journalistic style as *Tertium Organum*, it is quite different from the earlier book. Instead of a systematic argument, it is a collection of twelve separate essays. Instead of a theory, it consists of questions, suggestions, and guesses. The purpose of *Tertium Organum* is to set forth systematically those truths which Ouspensky believes he understands clearly and distinctly. The purpose of *A New Model of the Universe* is to explore some parts of that infinite field of mystery which various aspects of experience reveal. Here he solves no problems and comes to few conclusions, but rather suggests the subjective impressions aroused by these more profound questions which elude his understanding (as they do the understanding of us all) but do not escape his interest (and it is here that he differs from most of us). The first three essays are primarily epistemological: "Esotericism and Modern Thought," concerned with evolution within the human race, the possibility of mystical knowledge, and the concept of esotericism; "The Fourth Dimension," which discusses some of the unsolved problems of the theory of space and time of *Tertium Organum*; and "Superman," in which various types

of humanity are compared. The next three essays are primarily religious: "Christianity and the New Testament," which attempts to show that Christ's teaching was neither otherworldly nor so ideal as to be impracticable, but quite practical and intended for this life, yet practical just because it was not for everybody; "The Symbolism of the Tarot," a series of subjective and impressionistic meditations suggested by contemplation of the cards of the Tarot pack; and "What is Yoga?" a critical study of the five types of Yoga. The next three essays are primarily psychological: "On the Study of Dreams and on Hypnotism," Ouspensky's technique for studying dreams, especially those which we have while awake; "Experimental Mysticism," an evaluation of his own attempts to stimulate the mystical consciousness artificially; and "In Search of the Miraculous," a series of sketches of Notre Dame, the Pyramids and Sphinx, the sapphire-eyed Buddha of Ceylon, the Taj Mahal, and the whirling dervishes of Constantinople. The last three essays are primarily scientific: "A New Model of the Universe," devoted to some philosophical implications of relativity and quantum mechanics; "Eternal Recurrence and the Laws of Manu," concerned with time, reincarnation, and evolution of the individual, including the peculiarly difficult concept of reincarnation into the past; and "Sex and Evolution," which concludes the book with a discussion of the evolution of the individual in terms of the evolution of the sensual, normal, and celibate forms of sex.

*Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*, a philosophical novel of 166 pages, was published by Holmes Press in 1947, shortly after Ouspensky's death. The Russian original had appeared in 1917. In the medium of fiction Ouspensky's vivid style is manifested in rapid action, and the story moves swiftly. The plot itself is very simple. A summary of it can hardly sound other than banal, and can give no suggestion of the powerful impression of the book itself. Osokin, a young man who has made a failure of his life through making the wrong decisions at crucial moments, indulges in the common fantasy of reliving his life. Like most of us, he is convinced that all would be well if only he could live his life over again knowing in advance



what he knows now. The story hinges on the fact that Osokin is enabled, by the aid of a magician, to do exactly that. He finds himself a schoolboy of fourteen, in precisely the same circumstances as before, but clearly remembering his past, or rather future, life to the age of twenty-six. Knowing just what he had formerly done wrong, and seeing clearly just what he needs to do in order to fulfill his desires, he is prepared for every crisis. Yet on every occasion he actually does exactly what he did before. The obvious lesson of this simple story is to deny the Socratic doctrine that virtue is knowledge, but the more profound meaning which the author intends to convey can only be understood, I take it, in terms of the theory of "eternal recurrence" discussed in *A New Model of the Universe*.

*In Search of the Miraculous*, published by Harcourt Brace in 1949, is an unhappy anticlimax to the list of Ouspensky's writings, and it would be unfortunate if anyone got his first impression of him from this dull book. While the style is similar to that of his other books, the content is much less interesting, because this work is devoted not to Ouspensky's philosophy but to Gurdjieff's. It is a journal of the years (1915 to 1924) when the author was studying under Gurdjieff, and it consists almost entirely of notes on the latter's instruction. Gurdjieff's character and personality, in spite of the disciple's attempt to present them favorably, appear rather disagreeable, and his doctrines are peculiarly unappealing. While one hesitates to speak dogmatically about matters he may not understand, I believe that even persons sympathetic with occultism will find little of interest in this fantastic jumble of pseudo-alchemy, pseudo-astronomy, and pseudo-musicology. This opinion seems to be confirmed by the recent posthumous publication of the first volume of Gurdjieff's own writings, in which the pure Gurdjieff, lacking the sugar-coating of Ouspensky's style, is so dull as to be unreadable. While one wonders how a man of Ouspensky's intellectual and moral force could have been so captivated by this teaching, we must also realize that he finally repudiated it and that it had little if any influence on his other works.

*The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution*, a series of five brief lectures composed in 1934, was published in 1950 by Hedgehog Press. It is a protreptic work with little value apart from the oral instruction it was designed to introduce, yet it forms a fitting conclusion to the body of Ouspensky's works. It speaks not of theory but of practice. It is concerned with the infinite possibilities of higher evolution, possibilities based on the already existing nature of the human soul with its vast but mostly unrealized potencies, which can be realized only by deliberate effort guided by esoteric instruction. The lesson of the book is a combined pessimism and optimism which is the heart of Ouspensky's philosophy: for the human race as such, and for the majority of individuals, there is no hope of improvement; but for any individual who so wills the way is open to rise above humanity to a higher form of being.

### III

#### SOURCES

Among the many sources which contributed to Ouspensky's philosophy as presented in *Tertium Organum*, first place must be given to Kant. The epistemological theory can be thought of as an attempt to go on from where Kant left off. Kant undertook to demonstrate how the laws of the phenomenal world are determined by the forms of intuition, space and time, characteristic of the human mind, but he did not show why we have these forms of intuition. This is what Ouspensky tries to explain.

In general, Ouspensky considers himself in the classical tradition of Western philosophy, and frequent references are made to classical philosophers, especially Plato. Mystical writers, both Western and Eastern, are quoted in connection with the philosophy of mysticism which is a central feature of *Tertium Organum*. In particular, Plotinus's treatise *On Intel-  
ligible Beauty* is cited as the most precise formulation of the "third canon of thought" which he knows. Occult and theological writers also influenced his thought, and are always referred to sympathetically.

Scientific theories current in his lifetime strongly influenced his philosophy and its expression, especially the theory of evolution and the theory of relativity. The former, which had such a dominant influence on early twentieth century thought, affected his way of presenting his doctrine rather than the doctrine itself, and he warns against understanding biological evolution too naively. Ideas associated with the theory of relativity (especially those of N. A. Oumoff and H. Minkowsky) are of the greatest importance for his treatment of the fourth dimension.

Two books are discussed at some length. *A New Era of Thought*, by C. H. Hinton, he considers an ingenious, although inevitably futile, attempt to arrive at an understanding of four-dimensional space by objective means, that is, by a mathematical study of space itself. *Cosmic Consciousness*, by R. M. Bucke, he considers as presenting the correct subjective approach to epistemology, but as vitiated by the error of believing the higher consciousness to be evolving with the human race, instead of being, as Ouspensky believes, characteristic of a small minority within it.

#### IV

##### THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Ouspensky's epistemology is set forth systematically in *Tertium Organum*.

We know that we exist as conscious minds and that the world around us exists, but we do not know clearly either our own nature or the nature of the world or how they are related to each other.

The world exists, or at least appears to us as existing, in time and space, the latter having three dimensions. The distinction of time and space, however, can hardly be an objective reality. Events known to us are arranged in a four-dimensional continuum. We classify them as past events which are unreal because no longer existing, present events which are real but of zero duration, and future events which are unreal because not yet having occurred (and perhaps not yet even determined).

But it is absurd to restrict reality to an infinitesimal, and perpetually vanishing, section of what we know. Objectively, past and future events are no less real than present ones. The problem of knowledge is to explain why we see things in this paradoxical way, why we see only a three-dimensional cross-section of the four-dimensional reality.

Scientific or mathematical study of the physical world, that is, of time and space and the phenomena occurring in them, throws little or no light on this problem. Since physics studies the relations among events in time and space, it cannot inquire into the cause of time and space themselves, which are presupposed by its techniques. According to Kant, the source of time and space as forms of the phenomenal world is to be found not in the objects known but in the nature of the knowing subject. If this is so, the explanation of our distinction between time and space must be sought in an analysis of our way of knowing, that is, our sort of thought or consciousness.

We know the world by means of sensations, perceptions, and concepts — and also, to a limited extent and more vaguely, by emotions. If Kant's thesis that time and space are our forms of intuition is correct, then time and space as we apprehend them must depend on our way of knowing the world, namely by sensation, perception, and conception. This conclusion would be confirmed if we could compare our way of knowing with other ways of knowing, which employed more or fewer than these three faculties, and could see how the same objective reality would appear to such minds as phenomenal worlds different from our phenomenal world with its time and its three-dimensional space.

Spiritually and artistically inclined persons do use the faculty of emotion more than most of us, and they do describe the world in terms of values and eternal verities not intelligible in physical concepts. But it is difficult for us to understand the experience of a consciousness which is higher than ours in the sense of using a fourth mental faculty. If we could find a consciousness lower than ours in the sense of having only some of our faculties, we might hope to understand how the world would appear to it. And the relation of its world to ours would

provide an analogy for considering the relation of our world to a higher one.

This condition is fulfilled in the consciousness of animals. Animals have no concepts, as is shown by their lack of language, without which concepts are impossible. They know the world, therefore, by sensations and perceptions only. In the case of the lower animals, their anatomy and behavior indicate that they lack even the faculty of perception and so must have knowledge based on mere sensation.

Animals, apprehending the world by perception without concepts, see it as two-dimensional. We know that this is true because we ourselves *perceive* the world as two-dimensional. We actually *perceive* only the surfaces of things, not their interiors; the field of vision is a two-dimensional continuum. We ordinarily complete our apprehension of a perceived object by adding the third dimension, but this requires a higher mental faculty. The animal, lacking this faculty, apprehends only the perceived field of vision, and for him, consequently, the world is two-dimensional. The lower animal, restricted to sensation, cannot even combine his sensations into an ordered field, for this requires perception; and for him the world can only be a sequence of sensations, one-dimensional.

The third dimension, never perceived, is introduced into our experience by our peculiarly human faculty of forming concepts by abstraction from perceptions. When we walk around a house, we perceive an infinite number of different appearances as we regard it from different directions. We do not consider these appearances to be an infinite number of different things, because we integrate them into the one object we call a house, an object which can include an infinite number of two-dimensional aspects because it is itself three-dimensional. Abstracted or integrated from a succession of perceptions, a house is not a percept but a concept. We perform this mental operation very easily — so easily that we may be tricked into performing it even when the reality does not justify it, as when a picture seems to have depth, though we also sometimes fail to perform it when we should, as when the starry sky seems to be a dome.

Since apprehension of the first, second, and third dimensions of space is given by sensation, perception, and conception respectively, it seems plausible to suppose that apprehension of the fourth dimension of space would be given, if at all, by some fourth mental faculty added to the other three. We might hope to apprehend it through the emotional, non-conceptual, way of thinking found in art and in mystical religion. But in order to understand what this might mean, we turn to the analogy presented by the relation of our world to that of animals.

Animals apprehend things, even three-dimensional things, as two-dimensional, yet surely animals must recognize the difference between a three-dimensional solid and a two-dimensional surface. They do recognize this difference, but not in the same way in which we recognize it. When walking around a house, both man and animal *perceive* a succession of different visual fields or façades. We, by our faculty of conception, integrate these into the three-dimensional object which includes them all. The animal, unable to do this, experiences nothing but the house as *perceived*, that is, as a two-dimensional object, but an object constantly *changing*. For him it is an object changing or moving in time, whereas for us it is a fixed unchanging object — but infinitely greater and more complicated because three-dimensional. As the animal turns a corner of the house, its appearance, which for him is the whole house, changes more rapidly, that is, there is an acceleration. The change follows an orderly pattern analogous to what we call physical law, and presumably the animal anticipates the future appearance of the house if he is familiar with it or similar objects. In the case of an actually moving object, however, the change in appearance is brought about by the combination of two independent causes, the observer's motion and the object's motion. The consequent behavior of the apparent object will be much more complicated and so not follow any predictable pattern, and such an object must appear to the animal as transcending the laws of the physical world, that is, as being what we would call living. The dog barks at the passing automobile because to him it is alive.



On the basis of these considerations we can understand how various kinds of objects must appear to various kinds of minds.

A one-dimensional object, that is, a line, appears to a lower animal, for example, a snail, as a thing occupying part of the world. Lacking the faculty of perception, he cannot grasp simultaneously the line itself and the space on either side of it, and so cannot see how it fails to be substantial. A higher animal, for example, a dog, perceives the field in which the line exists. To him the line appears to be not a thing but the boundary or cross-section of a thing. To a man it appears even less substantial, being only a cross-section of a cross-section of a thing.

A two-dimensional object cannot be grasped as a whole by the lower animal. Apprehending only part of it by sensation and not integrating his remembered sensations into any perceptual pattern, he considers the part he no longer senses to be past, the part he senses now to be present, and the part he has not yet sensed to be future. That is, to him the object appears to be changing or moving in time. To the higher animal it appears an unchanging thing, because it occupies a definite part of the infinite field of vision which for him constitutes the world. To a man it is only a surface or cross-section of a thing.

A three-dimensional object, such as a house, is so far beyond the comprehension of the lower animal that it can only appear to him as changing or moving in an unpredictably complicated way analogous to the way in which the behavior of living organisms appears to us. (Of course the snail does not think of it in these terms, since he does not think at all, but only senses.) This object appears to the higher animal, who cannot integrate his remembered and anticipated perceptions of it into a single concept, as changing or moving, but in a less complex way. To a human being it is a stationary thing occupying a definite part of the three-dimensional universe. If there is a higher consciousness capable of apprehending the world in four dimensions, the three-dimensional object must appear to him not as a thing but as the boundary or cross-section of a thing.

A four-dimensional object, such as a moving automobile, which can be located only by four coordinates, appears even to the higher animal as unpredictable — alive, as it were. To us it appears as a three-dimensional body moving in time with a motion comprehensible in terms of past, present, and future. To the higher consciousness apprehending our past, present, and future all together, it would be a motionless body occupying a definite part of the four-dimensional world.

A five-dimensional object, and Ouspensky suggests that such may be the bodies of living organisms, must appear to the higher animal as an even more unpredictable and inscrutable two-dimensional object — miraculous, as it were. To us it appears as a three-dimensional body moving in time, but moving in a way which eludes our understanding and scientific laws, a way which we call life and describe as freedom. Even to the higher consciousness it appears as moving in time. Hence Ouspensky's definition of life as "motion in the fourth dimension" — motion intelligible only in terms of a fifth dimension, just as mechanical motion in the third dimension is intelligible only in terms of the fourth dimension which we call time. If the fourth dimension is time, the fifth dimension is eternity; and if we are brought into the presence of time by the phenomena of mechanical motion, we are brought into the presence of eternity by the phenomena of life and death.

An analysis of these considerations shows that space always increases at the expense of time, so that the mind which is more aware of space is correspondingly less aware of time. The dog, by his power of perception, has a greater space sense than the snail. Man, by his power of conception, has a still greater space sense, adding a third dimension. The higher consciousness has a still greater space sense, apprehending our phenomenal world of the present moment as a mere section of his world. But where he sees unchanging and motionless things, we see change and motion in time. Where we see things, the animal sees change and motion in time. Where the animal sees things, the lower animal sees change and motion in time. And where each form of mind sees mechanical motion, the next lower form sees freedom and life. The less developed

the consciousness, the more dynamic the world; the more developed the consciousness, the more static is the world.

Time and space, therefore, are functions of our way of thinking, but they are by no means coordinate and equally subjective forms of intuition, as Kant suggested. Reality is spatial, that is, it consists of entities having a certain order among themselves. We cannot impose on reality a non-existent order, but, being limited in our power of apprehension, we grasp only part of its objective order, and therefore impose on reality, so to speak, a non-existent lack of order. The space sense, defined as "the power of representation by means of form," is, for any consciousness, the measure of its ability to apprehend the real world. This ability varies with the mental faculties available. The higher animal, adding to sensation the power of perception, apprehends the world more fully than the lower animal; man, with his concepts, still more fully; and the super-human consciousness, with its additional faculty (if such there be), even more fully. To apprehend the world more fully means to apprehend more space, since space is the form of the world. It means to apprehend another dimension, by which space is multiplied infinitely.

Time is the vague apprehension of that which we cannot represent adequately. Whatever one is unable to integrate into his mental picture of the world is left over as vague and not actually existing — experiences he remembers as the no longer existing past, experiences he anticipates as the not yet existing future. Whatever he can integrate finds its place in the actually existing present. Much that we humans can integrate (for example, the other side of the house) is for the animal past or future, not existing now. Much that we cannot integrate (for example, yesterday's sunset or tomorrow's sunrise) is for the higher consciousness existing now. If space is the measure of our apprehension of reality, time is the measure of our lack of apprehension. The higher the consciousness, the richer its space sense, and the lower the consciousness, the richer its time sense; but richness of time sense is only a pseudo-richness, because time is the measure not of knowledge but of ignorance. "The idea of time recedes with the expansion of consciousness."

Understanding the relation between time and space, and following the analogy of the relation between the animal's world and our own, we are prepared to consider the nature of the reality underlying our phenomenal world, the reality, that is, as it would appear, and perhaps does appear, to a consciousness higher than ours. What we call time he will call the fourth dimension of space. What we call motion he will call extension in the fourth dimension. What we call acceleration he will call an angle. What we call life he will call motion. And what we call space he will call a surface. What we call ether waves he will call surface waves. What we call the universe, he will call a cross-section of the universe, and not necessarily a particularly important one. What we call non-being he will recognize as those entities which do not happen to intersect our four-dimensional space-time at all.

It is hard for us to realize that past and future events are for the experience of the higher consciousness, and also objectively in themselves, just as real as present events. It is harder for us to realize that other entities which are neither past nor present nor future, and so for us not existent at all, are equally real. And it is hardest for us to realize that past and future can be interchanged. For a consciousness confined to a plane the variously colored spokes of a wheel rotating through that plane appear as a line of changing color, the spokes which have gone through being past and those which have not yet come being future, although in reality all the spokes are existing simultaneously. If two such wheels rotate in opposite directions, a spoke of one which is past and a spoke of the other which is future may really, that is, in the third dimension, be quite close to each other. Likewise, events we call past and events we call future may really, in the fourth dimension, be close together and capable of influencing each other without the intercession of any present event.

These geometrical relations are only one aspect of the difference between the various ways of apprehending the world. The world as apprehended in the higher way differs from the world as apprehended in the lower way not only in being infinitely greater, because of its additional dimension of space, but also in possessing infinitely richer values incomprehensible

to the lower consciousness. Just as an animal cannot comprehend the significance which a small inconspicuous object like a book may have for us, so we cannot comprehend the meanings, purposes, beauties, and values which an object we find insignificant may have for the higher consciousness apprehending it in ways transcending ours. Conversely, values we consider very important may appear in the higher perspective as having little or no significance either theoretical or practical — like the shadows in Plato's cave. Furthermore, what we see as properties of a single object may be distinct and unrelated things intersecting only accidentally in our space, while what we see as distinct objects may be closely related parts of a single real thing.

We are not, however, absolutely cut off from all knowledge of the higher world. We have at least two ways of approaching it, religion and art. In the teachings of the religious mystics we can recognize the characteristics we would expect to find in a description of the world as experienced in a higher way: a four-dimensionality implicit in their emphasis on eternity, with a corresponding depreciation of time; ineffable bliss and beauty, with a corresponding contempt for conventional values; thought primarily emotional, with a corresponding disparagement of rational criteria. The notorious irrationality of mystical literature is indeed inevitable, as we can see by considering the difficulty we would have in describing our conceptual experience in a language devised for perceptual experience and so having only proper nouns: for example, "John and Peter are both men," would have to be expressed, "John and Peter are both Johns and Peters." But art is our most powerful instrument of higher knowledge. In the fine arts we possess a technique by which conceptually indefinable beauties and meanings are intuited emotionally, though only by those who are capable of such intuition. Art, which apprehends profound differences among things physically alike, is the primitive beginning of the language of the higher world.

We cannot consider this higher world logically, for our logic, as Kant correctly pointed out, applies only to our phenomenal world. Presented with the claim of a higher knowledge, we can either reject it or accept it on faith. But the practical

response is to strive to make it real for us also, by developing our own latent mental powers. Ouspensky does not believe, with Kant, that we are forever confined to our present forms of intuition and categories of understanding, or, with Bucke, that the human race is evolving toward "cosmic consciousness." He believes that such evolution is possible, not for all men, but for some men — the ability to create, not merely destroy, being the sign of the potentially superhuman minority. It is possible to wake up from a dream, especially if you realize that it is a dream, not however by means of anything you can do in the dream itself. Likewise, it is possible, for those innately capable, to awaken, as it were, from the phenomenal world. The first prerequisite is to realize that it is a phenomenal world, and therein lies the importance of epistemology. The means is not by doing anything in the phenomenal world itself, but by developing the *emotional* faculty latent in us, especially the unifying emotion of love. Space is the unity of reality. As the surface binds lines, and the solid binds surfaces, into a whole, so "four-dimensional space is the distance between a group of solids, separating these solids, yet at the same time binding them into some to us inconceivable whole." The faculties by which we know reality more adequately are unifying faculties. Just as perception correlates distinct sensations and conception integrates different perceptions, so love unites things which would otherwise be separate. This explains the importance of love in mystical experience. The mystic's goal is to become, by means of love, a *superhuman* mind, and so to apprehend the infinite richness of the four-dimensional reality. This goal is formulated, in a curiously literal way, in St Paul's verse (Ephesians, 3, 18): *That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.* Love, religion, and art, although often diverted to this-worldly or even immoral ends, have as their purpose the enlargement of consciousness and consequent knowledge of that infinite reality of which the world we see is only an appearance.



V

CRITICISM

(1) The statement that a consciousness endowed only with sensation apprehends the world in one dimension seems to be an error. Sensation alone gives no dimensions at all, but only a stream of sense data. This stream forms, to be sure, a one-dimensional sequence, but this sequence is time, not space. The two dimensions of perceived space are produced together by the faculty of perception. Sensations, perceptions, and concepts produce phenomenal worlds not of one, two, and three, but of zero, two, and three dimensions respectively.

(2) No reason is given why perception should reveal two, rather than any other number of, dimensions. Yet there seems to be a reason. We *perceive* the world in two dimensions, I suppose, because our sense-organs are two-dimensional. An exception is the organ of hearing, in which the sense receptors are arranged in a one-dimensional structure, and sounds consequently form a one-dimensional sequence of tones. In the retina, however, the receptors are arranged in a two-dimensional structure, and the experience corresponding to their stimulation is a two-dimensional field of vision the points of which correspond to the visual receptors. If these receptors were arranged three-dimensionally, if the retina were a semi-transparent jelly in which they were scattered, with some kinds of light able to penetrate more deeply than others and so stimulate the receptors farther from the surface, then the pattern of stimulation would be three-dimensional, and presumably the corresponding experience likewise, and we would directly perceive solids instead of surfaces. Our touch receptors are also arranged in a two-dimensional pattern on the skin, and retina and skin are the organs by which we *perceive* the world in two dimensions. Some fishes have the receptors of their principal sense organ arranged on a line, and presumably they, if they have the faculty of perception, experience the world as one-dimensional.

(3) Ouspensky says that the third dimension of space is known by *conception*, whereas the textbooks of psychology

speak of our *perception* of the third dimension. The fact seems to be that we have three words ("sensation," "perception," and "concept") to indicate four things (the simple data of immediate awareness, the patterns in which these data present themselves, the corporeal objects we construct by integrating these patterns with other remembered or imagined patterns, and the universal ideas we form by abstraction from such objects). Ouspensky uses the word "sensation" for the first, "perception" for the second, and "concept" for the third and fourth; while the textbooks use "sensation" for the first, "perception" for the second and third, and "concept" for the fourth. If we want four words for the four things, we might call the simple unarranged data "sensations," their patterns (not mixed with images) "perceptions," corporeal objects "concrete concepts," and universals "abstract concepts." A difficulty in Ouspensky's doctrine appears immediately. His argument that animals lack concepts applies to *abstract concepts*, but his argument that concepts are necessary for the third dimension applies to *concrete concepts*, and so the proof that animals inhabit a world of two dimensions collapses. This does not invalidate the general theory, but shows that the line between the two-dimensional and three-dimensional worlds need not necessarily be drawn at the point between non-human and human.

(4) A more serious difficulty is involved in Ouspensky's attempt to abolish time from reality. An unmoving house may *appear* moving to the perceiving animal, but only if the animal himself is *really* moving. Ouspensky quotes with approval (*Tertium Organum*, p. 130) Oumoff's statement, "Time does not flow, any more than space flows. It is we who are flowing, wanderers in a four-dimensional universe." But does not this flowing of ours itself require a real time? Near the beginning of *Tertium Organum* (p. 47) Ouspensky, after pointing out that "we see the world as through a narrow slit," that is, we see only a cross-section of the four-dimensional reality, asks two questions: "Why do we not see, through this slit, the same thing?" and, "Why can we not extend that slit?" The rest of the book is an answer to the second question. We cannot "extend the slit" because we are restricted by our char-

acteristically human mental processes; we can extend it only if we change these. But no answer is ever given to the first question. To Ouspensky (though no more than to Plato, Kant, or any other philosopher who denies the reality of time) we cannot but pose the problem: how can there be even an illusion of time if the conscious subject is not changing, and how can the conscious subject change except in real time?

## VI

### COMMENT

Modern epistemology began with Descartes's distinction between mind and matter, that is, subjective self and objective world. This distinction led to Hume's scepticism. Since mind knows matter neither innately, as Locke had shown, nor empirically, as Berkeley had shown, we can have no knowledge of the objective world. Science is impossible, because scientific knowledge is knowledge of the laws governing the external object, and the subject, confined to its own experience, has no means of discovering the laws of that which is outside its experience. Kant refuted Hume's conclusion by showing that, although Hume's argument was sound, he was wrong in concluding that it invalidated scientific knowledge. Hume did not understand what science is. We must go beyond the distinction of subject and object and subdivide the object into reality and appearance. With regard to the reality, or thing-in-itself, Hume's argument is valid, and no knowledge is possible. But with regard to the appearance, or phenomenon, knowledge is possible, because its laws are synthetic judgments a priori determined by the subject. Science is possible because it is concerned, with the objective world to be sure, but with its appearance, not its reality. But in demonstrating the possibility of science Kant at the same time demonstrated the impossibility of mysticism. Mysticism is an alleged knowledge of reality, and reality is just what Kant showed to be unknowable. If the mystics have forms of intuition and categories of understanding different from those of other people, then no doubt the world must appear to them differently, but this peculiar world of the mystics is only a different appearance, a different phenomenal

world, and could at best claim only an equal validity with the ordinary phenomenal world. Mysticism, therefore, defined as knowledge of reality, seems to be impossible, just as science, defined as knowledge of the external object, seemed to be impossible before Kant's explanation of it.

Ouspensky demonstrates the possibility of mysticism in a manner similar to that in which Kant demonstrated the possibility of science, and so is related to Kant somewhat as Kant was related to Hume. The world as it appears to the mystics, different from the world as it appears to other men because apprehended emotionally instead of conceptually, is not just another phenomenal world, but is the reality of which the ordinary phenomenal world is an appearance. Just as, in order to understand the possibility of science, we must divide the object into reality and appearance, so, in order to understand the possibility of mysticism, we must subdivide the reality into ultimate reality and proximate reality. Ultimate reality, the thing-in-itself, is unknowable, as Hume, Kant, and Ouspensky all agree. But the proximate reality, that is, the reality of which a given appearance is the appearance, may be knowable, though not by the same means by which the appearance is known. Although the proximate reality is itself only an appearance of the ultimate reality, still it is reality relative to its own appearances. A house, for example, even though a mere phenomenon, is the reality of which one of its own façades or cross-sections is an appearance, less real than the house itself. Likewise, a four-dimensional entity is the reality of which one of its three-dimensional sections is an appearance. To know the reality, rather than the appearance, in this sense of proximate reality, is to have knowledge infinitely greater in spatial content, in values, and in significance. If the mystic does have such knowledge, he can rightly claim to have knowledge of reality rather than appearance.

Thus Ouspensky's analysis of the relation among ways in which the same object may appear to different minds gives a *meaning* to the claim that the mystic's experience is an experience of reality and so establishes the *possibility* of mysticism. It does not demonstrate its actuality. Kant's distinction between thing-in-itself and phenomenon establishes the possibility of

science, but actual science requires the existence of human minds with human categories of understanding. Ouspensky's distinction of the degrees of reality establishes the possibility of mysticism, but actual mysticism requires the existence of "saints" endowed with some additional faculty. The evidence for the existence of such mystical experience is well known. Ouspensky's collection of citations from mystical literature is the least original part of his work. Readers already convinced of the actuality of mysticism may not need this defense of it. But those who, while unable to ignore the evidence for the existence of mystical experience, are equally unable to understand in what sense such experience can validly claim a value or reality beyond that of ordinary experience, will find in Ouspensky's doctrine a hypothesis by which this claim can be defended.

Ouspensky believes that knowledge is apprehension of space because space is the synthesis of reality and knowledge is the synthesis of our experience of reality. Sensation gives us the content of experience. Perception, conception, and love are unifying faculties which enable us to integrate that content more and more fully, and so synthesize it more and more fully in a spatial structure corresponding to that of objective reality. Time is our failure to synthesize experience and therefore our failure to apprehend reality. In thus identifying space with reality and time with illusion Ouspensky is carrying on the Platonic tradition of exalting being over becoming, and so stands in the twentieth century as a champion of classical philosophy against one of its most vigorous opponents, the most distinguished of his contemporary philosophers, Bergson.

For Kant space and time are equally subjective and, in a sense, unreal. Both Ouspensky and Bergson reject this coordination, but in opposite ways. For Bergson time is reality, while space is an artificial creation or illusion due to our conceptualization of reality. For Ouspensky space is the reality, and time is the illusion resulting from our inadequate comprehension of space. For Ouspensky only being is real; for Bergson only becoming.

Formulated in these terms, the two philosophies seem sharply opposed. But the space which Bergson rejects as unreal

is conceptual space, while the space which Ouspensky recognizes as real is a four-dimensional space transcending concepts. He too believes that we come to an apprehension of reality through an intuition of time, but he believes that such intuition leads to the absorption of time into space. Bergson will not consider the world *sub specie aeternitatis* lest time's creativity be lost. Ouspensky believes that such consideration does not destroy time's creativity but only its subjective vagueness. For Ouspensky, no less than for Bergson, reality eludes our scientific frames of thought. Space and time are contrasted only in the phenomenal world, becoming indistinguishable in the world of four dimensions. From this point of view the philosophy of the fourth dimension might be considered a synthesis of the Platonic philosophy of being and its antithetical Bergsonian philosophy of becoming.

Ouspensky, however, is not so introspective as Bergson. We look within ourselves to study the principles of psychology and epistemology, but we do not look within ourselves to discover truth. For that we look without — first by sensation, which reveals truth inadequately yet accurately so far as it goes; then by perception; then by discursive concepts; then by love. We grow in wisdom not by denying experience but by enlarging it. Love frees us from the limitations of ordinary human thinking, and this freedom gives us a fuller knowledge of the truth.

A fuller, but never a final, knowledge. "The true and real progress of thought," he says at the end of *Tertium Organum*, "is only in the broadest striving toward knowledge, that does not recognize the possibility of arrestment in any *found* forms of knowledge at all. The meaning of life is in eternal search." Herein Ouspensky differs from such a mystical philosopher as Plotinus. He explains the possibility of mysticism as knowledge of the proximate reality, and he suggests the ineffable bliss and richness of such knowledge. But beyond the fourth dimension is the fifth. Reality is knowable, but only because ultimate reality is unknowable.

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## HISTORY OF IDEAS AND THE CREATIVE WRITER

Basil Willey, who is Edward the Seventh Professor of English Literature at Cambridge University, has in the past fifteen years written three books important for an understanding of the relation between artists and the patterns of intellectual assumption with which they work. The best known of these, *The Seventeenth Century Background*, first appeared in 1934; *The Eighteenth Century Background* in 1940, and *Nineteenth Century Studies* only last year.

Mr. Willey himself reminds us that the three books do not pretend to an equal completeness in treating their subjects. The last is a collection of essays on individuals ranging in time from Coleridge to Arnold; while the first two deal with major subjects and centers of intellectual concern in their centuries. Since the earlier books, however, illuminate certain basic questions of metaphysics and theology which come to their climax only in the nineteenth century, it seems to me impossible to consider the value of the recent book apart from them.

The attitude assumed in all three books is neither so narrow as a mere discussion of ideas important to major writers would be, nor so inclusive as a general history of ideas if it were possible to write such a history. Mr. Willey follows the wise course of dealing with ideas which seem to him central for a whole time, but dealing with them as they come to a focus in the work of certain selected writers and thinkers. A result of this procedure for *The Seventeenth Century Background* is that, in developing the implications of the seventeenth century's rejection of scholasticism, Mr. Willey is able both to concern himself with the major thinkers — Bacon, Browne, Hobbes, Descartes, the Cambridge Platonists, Locke — and to indicate the importance for a whole time and culture of their collective revolution in thought.

Mr. Willey puts particular emphasis on the appearance of this revolution in places where we do not commonly look for it. The Cambridge Platonists, for example, despite all their fears

about Cartesianism, used one of Descartes' chief distinctions in developing their own religious concerns. "Deeply ingrained in the minds of the Platonists, and of the greater number of their contemporaries as well, was the assumption that concepts alone are real, and that whatever is concretely imagined is phantasmal" (*17th Cent. Back.*, 143). As one of them described it, "The pseudo-Prophetical Spirit is seated onely in the Imaginative Powers and Faculties inferior to Reason; whereas in the *gradus mosaicus* 'all imagination ceaseth, and the Representation of Truth descends not so low as the Imaginative part, but is made in the highest Stage of Reason and Understanding'" (148). Such a distinction asks for religion what Bacon asked for the study of nature, the pursuit of ends which are "real" through their appeal to the rationalistic mind. The imagination can hope only to create phantoms, while reason penetrates reality.

This division between the immediate and the abstract obviously avoids certain problems with which the mind should deal, and creates certain others which are not necessarily valid. Where does one derive a sanction for the reality revealed by reason? How can one maintain a separation between rationalistic "reality" and total experience? How does one distinguish between true and false rational structures by rational means alone? Such questions are dealt with in a most interesting and curious way both by the Platonists and by a thinker as officially opposed to them in certain ways as Descartes. The former depend in their thought upon a bifurcation of mind which permits the central truths of a revealed religion to be accepted without fundamental question, while the sanction for such faith is at the same time based more and more completely upon rationalistic description. Descartes, working in the opposite direction, accepts the existence of deity because he can claim it to be the most rational conclusion of his method of logical analysis. As Mr. Willey summarizes this latter position, "The ontological proof, one feels, attempts to prove by an intellectual process what is in reality 'given' (if at all) by other than intellectual means. Why did Descartes find the idea of a perfect being innate within him? Because centuries of Christian dis-

cipline, based upon the religious experience of Christ and the apostles, had written it upon the hearts of Europeans, so that it seemed to be 'naturally' there" (82).

Descartes and the Cambridge Platonists have in common, then, the conviction that certain assumptions — to us non-rational or super-rational — derive their chief justification by logical method. Such a conviction seems to prefigure the necessitarian paradox with which the next century has to deal: deity becomes sanctified reason, and as a result "we should hold, not that what God decrees is right, but that God decrees what is right." A thinker may claim to justify the ways of God to man, but in practice he comes increasingly to justify the ways of man to God — to claim that his own logical order for experience must be equally honored by deity. The immediate and obvious result, of course, is a seeming support for traditional Christian theology; but the more permanent effect is a denial of the usefulness of any concept of God not centered on the measurable order of the physical universe.

This paradox of faith justified by rationality takes several curious forms in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some of them quasi-theological and some patently secular. All seem to depend on the tacit modification and division of the various possible meanings of man's fall — whether it is regarded as an inward moral event or as an explanation for the burden and suffering caused by the nature of the physical universe. Hobbes, after all, accepts in many of its aspects the concept of fallen man, though he denies the center of the myth. Milton can still see it as a universal struggle between love and self-worship; but his contemporaries have other interpretations. Some share Hobbes' sacrifice of its symbolic value and accept in the most literal way a view of man as depraved without hope of salvation. If they cannot countenance such a view, then with Shaftesbury they are almost forced to develop the paradisaical aspect of the myth. The seventeenth century "dissociation of sensibility" in poetry has its counterpart in a philosophical split between the rationalizers of man's depravity and the rationalizers of his excellence.

Both these forms of dividedness derive much of their vigor from developments in scientific thought which have an increasing impact as the eighteenth century develops. A suspicion of the immediate is also a suspicion of the entire; if one distrusts a metaphor, he comes in time to distrust a man. One well-known result for poetry is an increasing separation between imagery and statement; an equally clear result in much philosophical procedure is the substitution of man's rational power for his full perceptive power.

This substitution takes place, logically enough, by means of a patently non-rational apotheosizing of the physical world — what Mr. Willey calls "the progressive divinization of nature in the course of the century." This divinization takes the various forms of a worship of the mathematical order; an optimistic acceptance of the idea of a plenum in nature which will justify man's chief qualities without his having to govern or shape them; and as a derivative from this second the view that man is somehow a product of the order of things — particularly that he is a moral product of the order of things. What one might call the metaphysically derived determinism of Hobbes on one side, Shaftesbury on the other, receives some sanction from the physical sciences in the course of the eighteenth century. The problem of evil vanishes in either case: whether one believes that the conditions of life are fixed and therefore unimprovable, or whether he resents this doctrine enough to maintain that though the present state of things is unsatisfactory there is nothing in man's nature to keep him from improving them indefinitely — in either case there is no room for the genuine struggle implied by *moral* as a descriptive term.

The paradoxes of such a related group of attitudes are obvious, and of course are ideally commented on in many of their aspects by David Hume. Perhaps more surprisingly, they are at least as well commented on by Samuel Johnson. "Orthodox" religious opinion, as we have noticed, seems to derive a certain stimulus and support from optimistic determinism; Johnson, like Hume, points out that the rooting of such determinism in reason is in itself an act of the mind with no basis in reason. While Hume and Johnson disagree almost completely about

why this should be so, they share a scepticism toward reason which allows each of them to accept a chief variant of eighteenth century orthodoxy without ever succumbing to it.

Both have an immediacy in their understanding of experience which protects them from over-speculation about rational human nature in the abstract. Like Edmund Burke, they are aware of the complex relation which exists between inwardly and outwardly ordered worlds of human experience — what one might almost call personal and communal forms of reason. They accept the honest conclusions which must be drawn from the fact that what seems merely personal when communicated may have within the individual mind the full force of actuality. One can assert neither that inward and outward forms of reason are the same, nor that inward reason is in any categorical way subsumed or rendered inferior by outward reason.

The failure of Hartley, d'Holbach and Godwin results from the fact that they are never aware of a confusion in their thought between these two sorts of mental activity. They spend their lives in evangelism for the very views of man which they hold to be inevitable characteristics of his nature. Such zeal casts the strongest critical light, of course, upon the constant and varied attempts of the whole eighteenth century to turn a theoretic structure for the external world into an equally adequate formula for the pragmatic order of individual experience. These attempts all fail by the very degree to which they claim to succeed — that is, by their greater or less insistence that the individual and inward man is a determined part of the general structure of things, fixed in his possibilities and therefore in his achievements.

The difficulties as well as the chief concerns of Wordsworth and Coleridge result from their preoccupation with this precise problem of the relation between immediate perception and objective existence. They share with certain of their greatest literary predecessors an awareness that poets "make" the order which philosophers paraphrase; they find the relationships of immediate and general, intuitive and rational, and they are able to do justice to those relationships because they do not have to abstract from them in order to deal with them.

Wordsworth's preoccupation with the power of the imagination to transform external nature — that is, to perceive in it significance which exists equally within the individual — points of course to the most basic and familiar means by which the romantic poets provide an "answer" to eighteenth century dilemmas. By finding the order of things to be simultaneously immediate and ultimate, they resolve their inherited problem of which kind of reality is valid into the more soluble problem of which moments in experience adequately reveal reality. Wordsworth's famous "spots of time" are such moments, when the inward immediate experience becomes one with the outward general event, and it is no longer fruitful to maintain that the two are separate.

It is the painful position of all the romantic poets, however, to have their answer in good part vitiated by the very question with which they are trying to deal. Their rejection of a universe which has become "lifeless and cold" still must be developed within the larger limitations of a world view which denies equal validity to intuition and measurement. Wordsworth's best poetry derives much of its power from the tension which it maintains between an inner conviction that the revelations of human life seen through nature at certain exalted moments are "real," and a logical unsureness about what the poet's perception of nature means in terms of mankind as a whole. His experience constantly threatens to break down at the point where the symbolic order of it in nature is to be communicated to his society. This is so above all because the poet does not have available to him for use in the forming of those symbols any resources except those which have come from within him as an individual; though he seems to have the support of an already divinized nature, it has actually become a nature with practically no human relevance.

To put the problem another way, nature for the romantics still has relevance, but only within each individual. One can communicate facts about the natural world, but one cannot communicate his complex awareness that nature forms a unity. This is one reason why Wordsworth often seems ridiculous; he is trying to communicate the permanent significance as well



as the factual existence of some particular cluster of objects or events. In the poem we get the objects, but not always the meaning of their relationship; the single poet cannot make himself an adequate force of transmission or organization between multiple nature on the one hand and multiple humanity on the other.

A striking fact about this difficulty is that the poets themselves recognize it as a danger, and yet can never quite recognize it in its true terms. Though the hope with which Wordsworth and Coleridge discuss the imagination is untempered by any explicit awareness that they lack an objective mythology with which to support it, each of the great romantics tries in his own way to protect so precarious a position. Sidney could say without irony that the world of the poet is golden, that of the historian merely brazen; but Byron must constantly oscillate his tone to show us that while he may imply such claims he knows all that the philistine may urge against them. Wordsworth's increasing dependence upon a conventional religious substructure is an alternate form of the same recognition; Coleridge's method is of course prose metaphysics and poetic silence. None of these means of self-protection, however, is an adequate answer to the threat for poetry of a "Nature" removed from man and yet dominant over him.

Keats is perhaps more aware than any of his contemporaries that the concept of nature in the thought of his own time menaces the poet. Not only is he conscious of "nature red in tooth and claw," but he is also conscious of nature's metaphysical — as well as physical — indifference to any conventional ethical view. The manipulation of natural symbols in his poetry is constantly directed toward this awareness; the separation between nightingale and observer in the famous *Ode* is completely effective in developing the longing as well as the partialness of human awareness, and the failure of momentary passionate insight to sustain its perception beyond that moment.

A nature which has been erected into a self-contained and all-inclusive order can be dealt with poetically only by a whole-hearted attempt to make a mystical organism out of

the natural machine — as Wordsworth did — or by a wholehearted attempt to emphasize man's apartness from nature — as Keats comes to do more and more consistently. The *Ode on a Grecian Urn* values finally in a work of art the qualities which divide it most sharply from a work of nature — permanence, poise, significance at a moment of arrested action. Man for Keats partakes of both worlds in such a way that he is seen as the unique creature who, living in a world of nature, recognizes significance in it as something which nature merely left to itself does not possess. Wordsworth tries to make his poems transparencies of nature, which will let one see through to the heart of things; Keats roots his vision finally in the work of art itself, and while the chief theme of his poetry is the inevitable defeat of man by nature, the final achievement of his poetry is a human triumph over nature.

This general problem faced by the romantic poets is not dealt with by Mr. Willey (even though it is implied in the developing argument of his two earlier books) because *Nineteenth Century Studies* deals primarily with a selected group of individual writers and thinkers. In the course of essays concerned with men as varied as Coleridge, Carlyle, Mill and the two Arnolds, however, Mr. Willey develops a quality of paradox in their thought which seems to me clearly to stem from the central romantic difficulty over the relation between man and nature. This confusion appears in the mid-century writers primarily as a tension between reforming and progressivist tendencies of thought and conservative or anti-optimist ones. Augustus Comte's dream of a catholic positivism is, as Mr. Willey indicates, shot through with this double view; the conflict in George Eliot's work between an official optimism and an actual pessimism in her treatment of human activity is an equally clear form of the position.

In terms of his interest in this paradoxical attitude, it is perhaps a limitation in Mr. Willey's book that he treats the early romantics too sketchily to provide a background for his discussion of the later figures. One cannot understand the difference between eighteenth and nineteenth century forms of the tension between conservative and progressive views of

man unless he recognizes that the chief poets at the beginning of the century attempted to modify both attitudes. Wordsworth's acceptance and exploration of a certain kind of "Nature" is as much a rejection of inevitable natural progress as Keats' more direct separation of man from nature. When certain later writers reassert their faith in human perfectibility, as a result, they do so not only without benefit of grace but without benefit of an automatically perfect natural world into which their dream of a rising humanity may be fitted. One must pay to Wordsworth and the best of his contemporaries the same tribute one pays to Darwin: they toughen the attitude toward nature which they inherit. Indeed they reconstruct it so that it no longer hides a spurious religious order beneath the supposedly inevitable beneficence of nature. Though for many of them the beneficence ultimately remains, it is only to be had by the individual who can succeed in establishing a proper relation between himself and the natural universe. It is not for them man's automatic fate to be "saved" because of his privileged place in the order of things.

In this way certain of the romantics establish a kind of neo-orthodoxy, based not so much on traditional religious patterns as on their own perception of man's place in the universe. In avoiding the deterministic optimism of their predecessors, and the somewhat frenetic optimism of many of their successors, they affirm human responsibility and — within proper limits — human achievement. We give them credit for something of their full stature if we recognize the courage with which they reject easy simplifications of man's position — a courage which their successors, on the whole, fail to understand or to employ.

Matthew Arnold, for instance, in whose thought Mr. Willey finds many of the chief themes of *Nineteenth Century Studies*, stands above most of his contemporaries in his awareness of the logical errors of a faith in materialist progress. To this degree he has learned what Wordsworth and Coleridge, like Milton and Shakespeare, have to teach him. At the same time, however, he is so affected by the progressive-conservative tensions of his own time that he fails to get to the root of mate-

alism in his suggestions for resisting it. His well-known equation of religion with poetry is a central example of this failure to define fully the proper attitude of society toward non-rationalist experience. Mr. Willey remarks that "to say that a thing is poetry is not to diminish its importance; only the Philistines make the mistake of supposing that" (p. 278). Unless one redefines *poetry* very carefully, however, he is likely to reenforce the Philistines in their suspicion of both poetry and religion. The position as Arnold presents it is still a defensive one; he finally accepts the attitude of his own time toward the relative value of different modes of thought.

Mr. Willey summarizes Arnold's attitude very clearly: "Science? yes! religion is scientific, for it rests upon the solid foundation of our experience as moral beings. . . . The hard-headed must needs accept this, whereas they will no longer accept the old credal statements as 'facts.' But once they have been induced to acknowledge the basis of natural truth, then let them receive back the rich store of Christian mythology and symbolism, but receive it as poetry: receive it, that is, as something most precious, something without which no amount of natural truth will thoroughly move and transform them" (p. 279). The obvious question to be asked of such a passage is exactly what poetry means; one must first satisfy the demands of "science" — that is, rationalism in Arnold's context — but if one fully does so, then why does poetry enter in as anything more than a pander to the emotions? Arnold's attempt to have at the same time the supposed certainty of science and the sensuous pleasure of art leads to the same dividedness of experience which Mr. Willey discusses in his earlier books. Poetry is a kind of propaganda medium; it urges people in a direction which is good for them, but it is not in itself independent of the cause which it supports.

By none of this do I wish to criticize Arnold unduly. Mr. Willey is quite right in remarking that "it is this combination in him of the spirit of criticism with the spirit of poetry and religion which raises him above the level of the average Victorian agnostic . . ." And yet as we look back at Victorian thought in terms of our own concerns it becomes apparent that

we fight many of the same difficulties in the analysis and interpretation of experience; while we have perhaps been able to go beyond them in recognizing some of the points at which hard-headedness is likely to become mere block-headedness. Because he is so understanding, Arnold yields too much. A man with less perception of the difficulties of resistance to materialist thought would have created a false ease by ignoring it; but it is possible to see also that Arnold adopted a half-way position in his opposition.

Perhaps my objection must finally be to Mr. Willey, and it is an objection based on admiration and a considerable amount of agreement. *Nineteenth Century Studies* as it stands does not go as far as it could in terms of Mr. Willey's earlier writing. In a book of this sort where the author does not attempt a "complete" analysis of certain ideas, he should at least be more complete about the context in which his individual subjects are to be placed. In treating Comte and Mill Mr. Willey asks questions which immediately evoke a critical attitude by which to deal with them. But he does not suggest such an attitude toward the writers he admires most; his respect for their virtues inhibits him from using material — developed in his earlier books — to provide a place where one might stand in interpreting them. As a result we are not given the insight into Coleridge or Arnold for which Mr. Willey himself has prepared the way.

Perhaps we must recognize a further and more general limitation in books of this sort. Creative writers deal with ideas both discursively and symbolically. It is no criticism of Mr. Willey to say that though he often does an excellent job of dealing with the first, he has no room for the second; and it is in their symbolic perception that able writers often deal most cogently with a pattern of ideas. One can abstract from *An Essay on Man* all kinds of stock eighteenth century concepts about man's dominant position in the best of all possible worlds. If one considers the poem as a whole however, he discovers that Pope has controlled these ideas by a subtle fusion of them with the religious and metaphysical assumptions of Milton and the English renaissance. It is by just such

fusions that artists are able to make one whole from the rational, emotive and active aspects of a particular attitude toward existence. The artist can give us, as no one else can, the full significance of an idea through its embodiment in a context which suggests its possible implications and relationships. If we ask, not only what his ideas are but what his poems mean, we may come to understand more about the value of history of ideas than can be reached in any other way.

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**Notes and Observations**

SOME RECENT WRITINGS  
IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF MATHEMATICS

Many of the publications in the philosophy of mathematics are necessarily concerned with issues of relatively restricted scope. Any attempt, therefore, to deal comprehensively with the body of mathematical truth from the point of view of one of the rival conceptions of knowledge and existence is *prima facie* deserving of somewhat detailed scrutiny. In his recent *The Philosophy of Mathematics*,<sup>1</sup> E. A. Maziarz has made an attempt of this kind on the basis of neo-Thomistic principles.

Maziarz proposes to offer "a solution that meets the requirements of recent developments in mathematics" as well as to chart "the course of its historical development."<sup>2</sup> The leitmotiv of his entire treatment is the doctrine of abstraction. Says he: "... mathematics ... in common with all sciences ... arises through the mental action of abstraction from sense data,"<sup>3</sup> and again, "pure mathematics is a speculative science which originates from the mental action of formal abstraction from things."<sup>4</sup> More specifically, we are told that "the laws of mathematical thinking are imposed on the mind from the very nature of quantified substance as *given* to the mind as it abstracts from the phantasms given by the sense from extra-mental reality."<sup>5</sup> The implications of this claim for the status of mathematical entities are then asserted to be the following: "The mathematical natures, though not capable of extra-mental existence as such, are not purely fictitious; it is the natural state of mathematical natures to be so abstracted and abstractly considered and mathematical natures are still *ens*

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<sup>1</sup> E. A. Maziarz, *The Philosophy of Mathematics* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147; see also p. 164.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183, n. 88.

*naturæ* and not merely *ens rationis*." <sup>6</sup> By virtue of the abstract pedigree which is claimed for it, mathematics is held to give us knowledge concerning *ens naturæ* and is therefore accorded essentially the same logical status as empirical knowledge. Maziarz maintains that both types of knowledge derive their truth from what he calls "the identification of the intellect with the thing known" <sup>7</sup> and the mind's "conformableness" to "real, extra-mental being." <sup>8</sup> The knower is said to become "the object in the order of intention... while remaining what he is — man — in the order of nature." <sup>9</sup>

It is not surprising that the doctrine of abstraction succeeds in explaining the applicability of such formal systems of pure mathematics as are known to apply to the physical world. Thus Maziarz is able to write: <sup>10</sup>

The question of applying mathematical principles to other sciences and consequently to reality is, of course, based on the fact that quantified substance is abstracted from extra-mental reality and re-applies there if due account is taken of qualities, motion and change.

The doctrine of abstraction, however, owes us not only an explanation of the applicability of such formal systems of pure mathematics as are known (or believed) to have an embodiment in the domain of physical or sensible existents, but also an exhibition of the physical counterpart of *every* formal system yet devised by pure mathematicians. The latter obligation is obviously incurred by *this* doctrine, and if abstractionism has any distinctive merits, these would become apparent in its capacity to fulfill it. At the same time, failure to meet this requirement would constitute the strongest evidence against the doctrine. Such failure would be manifest, if there were formal systems of pure mathematics which are either known to have no applicability to nature or for which no model is known. In either case, the availability of such a formal system would inevitably result in the embarrassing question: whence

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. E. Gilson's concept of "adequation" in *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* (London, 1936), chs. 12 and 13.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from Henri Renard by Maziarz, *op. cit.*, p. 175, n. 23.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184, n. 90.

has it been abstracted? Thomas Aquinas himself seems to have seen this clearly when he wrote:<sup>11</sup>

... mathematical things arise through abstraction from natural things;  
... and thus it is evident that those things which hold of mathematics  
are preserved in natural things.

It is understandable that Aquinas did not perceive any incongruity between this statement and the mathematical knowledge of his time. However, it is not clear how Maziarz can hope to defend successfully this same abstractionist thesis at a time when we can exhibit formal systems of pure mathematics having no known model for a given set of semantical rules and for which it could hardly be shown that they have been abstracted via the use of semantical rules differing from the given set. Several of the abstract non-Euclidean geometries can be cited as cases in point.<sup>12</sup> It is clear that there are systems of pure mathematics which are *not* the product of "the mental action of abstraction from sense data"! If the latter were *not* the case, it would be unnecessary for scientists to engage, as they do, in the indispensable and sometimes agonizingly difficult task of contemplating *alternative* formal structures, each having a presumption of existential embodiment in a *given* context, with a view to ascertaining which one of these does, in fact, find such an embodiment.<sup>13</sup> Maziarz is aware of the discrepancy between what is allowed by his doctrine of abstraction and the facts of mathematical axiomatics. All the more regrettable is it that he attempts, albeit in vain, to remove the difficulty by invoking the doctrine of dialectics ("*logica utens*") as an *asylum ignorantiae* when writing:<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Quoted by Maziarz, *op. cit.*, p. 228, n. 132, from III *De Caelo et Mundo*, Lect. 3, n. 4.

<sup>12</sup> For a telling refutation of any objections that might be raised here on the basis of Poincaré's conventionalist conception of geometry, see the very acute treatment by Hans Reichenbach in his *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (Berkeley, 1951), ch. 8. See also Cassirer's discussion of the impact of the rise of modern mathematics on the problem of knowledge in *The Problem of Knowledge* (New Haven, 1950), Part I.

<sup>13</sup> For a concise and forceful recent elaboration of this point, see the letter from A. Einstein in Viscount Samuel's *Essay in Physics* (Oxford, 1951).

<sup>14</sup> Maziarz, *op. cit.*, p. 224, n. 109 and n. 110.

... mathematics ... is a direct science, concerned with real and not logical being ...

... dialectics (*logica utens*) plays a large part in mathematical inventiveness, development and demonstration, as it does in all speculative sciences. What in fact may at first appear merely to be a logical being in mathematics, will, in the course of time, turn out to be a mathematical being. In this connection, for example, the frequent denomination of transfinite numbers or non-Euclidean geometry as purely logical beings, is too hasty a generalization. ... The main point at issue, it seems, is that thus far the mathematician has not as yet been able to give a mathematical demonstration of their existence, and the proof for the existence of these new mathematical entities is still in the dialectical stage.

Apparently unaware that his own recourse to "dialectics" is powerful evidence against the doctrine of abstraction both as a genetic theory of mathematical knowledge and as an account of the ontology of mathematical entities, he adds: <sup>15</sup>

There seems to be a tendency in those who speculate within the bounds of traditional philosophy, to attribute a merely logical being to such mathematical natures as have recently been invented. It is here maintained that though these are mathematical beings — *entia realia* — mathematicians as yet do not sufficiently understand their mathematical nature, and are only capable of establishing them dialectically.

Among the mathematical entities whose nature is presumably imperfectly understood, we must then count (1) such familiar objects as complex numbers and other kinds of numbers introduced in response to the demand for achieving closure under certain kinds of arithmetical operations and (2) esoteric properties like the dimension of the rational points in a Hilbert space of infinitely many dimensions and the (multiply) non-Archimedean property of certain geometries. No recourse to an obscure principle of dialectical reasoning, however, explains in keeping with the doctrine of abstraction why it is that, in the absence of models for the abstract formalisms in which these entities function, mathematicians are able to deal with such entities with impressive rigor. It is interesting to note that P. W. Bridgman, who presents an operational derivation of the meaning of numbers having strong affinities for the abstractive derivation of the Thomists, differs from Maziarz by having the courage of his convictions, for Bridgman is willing

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227, n. 125.

to surrender large parts of modern mathematics. In his recent paper "Some Implications of Recent Points of View in Physics," Bridgman declares:<sup>16</sup>

If we adopt this [operational] point of view, certain consequences follow. Perhaps the most important are with respect to the infinite processes which form the subject matter of much of "Mengenlehre." From the point of view of operations, and this means operations actually carried out or performable, an "infinite" process can only mean a process which is specified in such a way that the process is non-self-terminating. An infinite number is a certain aspect of what one does when he embarks on carrying out a process formulated in this way, that is, an infinite number is an aspect of a *program* of action. From this point of view it does not make sense . . . to speak of infinite numbers of different orders of infinity, as does Cantor.

Insofar as Maziarz does attempt to make amends for the inadequacies in his doctrine, he does so by making commitments which entail the surrender of his original position.<sup>17</sup>

Maziarz' book does have the merit, however, of directing attention to the need for a resumption of work on such basic problems as the existence status of mathematical entities, much as his own treatment of this and related problems is profoundly unsatisfactory.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, the more technically expert among philosophers of mathematics have devoted insufficient attention to these problems in their recent publications. Even during the current recrudescence of concern with Frege's logical writings, a critical appraisal of his emphatic *Begriffsrealismus* has been consigned to undeserved neglect. Though R. S. Wells' thorough study, "Frege's Ontology,"<sup>19</sup> represents a notable exception to this attitude, considerable further work is needed, since the critical analysis of the *Begriffsrealismus* issue is not included among the central topics of Wells' paper.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 3, No. 10 (October '49), p. 490.

<sup>17</sup> See Maziarz, *op. cit.*, pp. 203, 223, n. 99, 239, 242. For a current non-Thomistic version of the doctrine of abstraction, cf. Zenitta Vivier, "Quelques Aperçus Sur L'Abstraction Et Le Nombre," *Proc. 10th Int. Congr. Phil.*, (Amsterdam, 1949), pp. 661-667.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Maziarz' neo-Thomistic position on this issue with Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 1076<sup>a</sup> 8-1078<sup>b</sup>6.

<sup>19</sup> This journal, IV (1951), 537-73.

<sup>20</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 540-541. For mention of the conceptual realism issue by Wells, see *ibid.*, pp. 561, 562, 563, 564, and 567.

The current revival in the study of Frege seems to have been occasioned by a series of translations of that author's writings into English.<sup>21</sup> Among these, we should note J. L. Austin's translation of Frege's *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik*<sup>21</sup> and a series of translations in *The Philosophical Review*<sup>22</sup> and in *Mind*.<sup>23</sup> That Frege has not been successful in winning the assent of contemporary writers on the ontology of mathematical entities can be readily seen from the fact that both psychologism and formalism — the two schools in the philosophy of mathematics against which Frege pitted his own conceptual realism — are espoused by such responsible contemporary writers as W. H. Werkmeister and F. Waismann. The former writes:<sup>24</sup>

...all we wanted to demonstrate here is that man's mind can comprehend only what we ourselves create in conformity with generic laws and functional concepts; and that mathematical "entities" owe their "existence" exclusively to such laws; that, in fact, mathematical "existence" merely means to be thought-generated in conformity with accepted rules, and that there is nothing mysterious about it.

This psychologistic interpretation of pure mathematics at once suggests that we ask why that science is so widely applicable to physical nature. To answer this question with consistency, Werkmeister must invoke his strongly Kantian conception of the physical sciences, a conception which I think Reichenbach successfully refuted in his recent *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (see ch. 8) and in his earlier writings ("Kant und die Naturwissenschaft," *Naturwiss.* 21 (1933), esp. pp. 601 and 624; also chapter 1 in his definitive *Philosophie der Raum-Zeit-Lehre* [Berlin, 1928]).

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<sup>21</sup> G. Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic* (Oxford, 1950); the German text is reprinted alongside the English translation.

<sup>22</sup> M. Black, "A Translation of Frege's *Ueber Sinn und Bedeutung*," *Phil. Rev.*, 57 (1948), 207-230.

M. Black, "Frege Against The Formalists," *Phil. Rev.*, 59 (1950), 77-93, 202-20, 332-45.

<sup>23</sup> For these, see the bibliography in Wells, *op. cit.*, pp. 571-573 and P. T. Geach, "On Concept and Object," *Mind*, LX (1951), 168-180.

<sup>24</sup> W. H. Werkmeister, *A Philosophy of Science* (New York, 1940), p. 187.



A contemporary formalist rejoinder to Frege is contained in *Einführung in das mathematische Denken*,<sup>25</sup> by F. Waismann, who writes as follows:

Sind die Zahlen Schöpfungen des menschlichen Geistes oder kommt ihnen eine selbständige Art des Seins zu? Werden sie erfunden oder werden sie entdeckt? ... Sollen wir unsere Ansicht in eine kurze Formel fassen, so würden wir sagen: die Bedeutung eines Zeichens ergibt sich aus seiner Verwendung. Die Regeln der Verwendung verleihen dem Zeichen erst seine Bedeutung. Wir lehnen damit die Auffassung ab, dass die Regeln aus der Bedeutung der Zeichen folgen.<sup>26</sup> ...

Der bedeutendste Vertreter der besprochenen Auffassung ist Frege.<sup>27</sup> ...

Für Frege stand die Alternative so: Entweder wir haben es mit Tintenstrichen auf Papier zu tun — das gäbe keine Arithmetik; oder wir müssen zugeben, dass die Zeichen eine Bedeutung haben, und dann existiert die Bedeutung unabhängig von den Zeichen. Aber die Bedeutung ist ja nicht ein Ding, das auf geheimnisvolle Weise mit dem Zeichen gekuppelt ist; sondern sie ist die Verwendung des Zeichens, und über diese gebieten wir.<sup>28</sup>

A quotation from Frege will suffice to bring into sharp focus the clash between the Fregean realistic ontology of number and Waismann's formalist rejection of the latter. Frege says:

For number is no whit more an object of psychology or the result of psychical antecedents than, let us say, the North Sea is.<sup>29</sup>

... number words are to be understood as standing for self-subsistent objects.<sup>30</sup>

... even the mathematician cannot create things at will, any more than the geographer can; he too can only discover what is there and give it a name.

<sup>25</sup> Vienna, 1936, with an introduction by K. Menger. An English translation by Theodore J. Benac, *Introduction to Mathematical Thinking*, with a preface by K. Menger, has been announced for publication in November 1951 by Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.

<sup>26</sup> For a clear, recent defense of the position rejected here by Waismann, see C. I. Lewis, *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (La Salle, 1946), pp. 152-158.

<sup>27</sup> Waismann, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>29</sup> *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, *op. cit.*, p. 34<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73<sup>e</sup>. For a recent critique of these Fregean ideas as elaborated by Russell, see A. Darbon, *La Philosophie des Mathématiques* (Paris, 1949), ch. 16.

The error that infects the formalist theory of fractions... is... if no contradiction is anywhere encountered, the introduction of the new numbers is held to be justified, ... as though freedom from contradiction amounted straight away to existence.<sup>31</sup>

A concise statement from Frege also tells us why he rejects an abstractive theory of the type defended by Maziarz:<sup>32</sup>

We now see also why there is a temptation to suggest that we get number by abstraction from things. What we do actually get by such means is the concept, and in this we then discover the number. Thus abstraction does genuinely often precede the formation of a judgment of number. It would be an analogous confusion to maintain that the way to acquire the concept of fire risk is to build a frame house, with timber gables, thatched roof and leaky chimneys.

Among noteworthy recent editions of basic works in the philosophy of mathematics is the 1950 translation of Bernhard Bolzano's posthumously published *Paradoxien des Unendlichen* by D. A. Steele,<sup>33</sup> who contributed an interesting historical introduction of fifty-five pages. Perhaps the one thought emphasized by Bolzano which is best known to philosophers is his inclusion of the fact that infinite sets can be mapped onto proper subsets of themselves among the *paradoxes*. Before stating this property, Bolzano cautions the reader that "it will sound so paradoxical that we shall do well to linger somewhat over its investigation."<sup>34</sup> But he does not fail to point out that "to the disadvantage of our insight into many a truth of metaphysics and physics and mathematics, it has hitherto been overlooked."<sup>35</sup> It will be recalled that precisely this violation of Euclid's axiom of magnitude ("the whole is greater than the part") was made the defining property of infinite sets by Dedekind.

Apart from Steele's appreciation, philosophically significant portions of Bolzano's work have received attention in the new Italian quarterly review of methodology and symbolic logic *Methodos*, which began publication in 1949.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> *Paradoxes of the Infinite* (London, 1950 and New Haven, 1951).

<sup>34</sup> Bolzano, *op. cit.*, (ed. Steele), §20, p. 96.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>36</sup> Y. Bar-Hillel, "Bolzano's Definition of Analytic Propositions," *Methodos*, II (1950), 32-55.

Hermann Weyl has rendered a great service to students of the philosophy of mathematics in the English-speaking world through the publication of a revised and augmented English edition of his "Philosophie der Mathematik und Naturwissenschaft," which had appeared in 1927 as part of the *Handbuch der Philosophie*.<sup>37</sup> Few works indeed can match the skillful blend of masterly analytical treatment and rich erudition so abundantly present everywhere in this book. Equally welcome is the reprinting of Carl B. Boyer's excellent *The Concept of the Calculus*,<sup>38</sup> which should be read by everyone interested in philosophical issues associated with the development of the differential and integral calculus. Also reprinted<sup>39</sup> was Max Black's *The Nature of Mathematics*, first published in 1933.<sup>40</sup>

A number of Leibniz' essays in mathematical philosophy together with some of his other contributions have now become easily and inexpensively available in P. P. Wiener's *Leibniz Selections*, published in 1951 in Scribner's Series.

In a collection of essays entitled *Essays on Logic and Language*,<sup>41</sup> there is a contribution by J. N. Findlay called "Time: A Treatment of Some Puzzles" in which the author raises the issue of Zeno's paradoxes.<sup>42</sup> In agreement with Whitehead,<sup>43</sup> Findlay thinks that the real issue in these paradoxes centers on the structure of time. For when Zeno's "Dichotomy" paradox is denuded of "its spatial and other

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<sup>37</sup> H. Weyl, *Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science* (Princeton, 1949).

<sup>38</sup> Originally published by Columbia in 1939, Boyer's book was republished by Hafner in 1949 with an introduction by R. Courant.

<sup>39</sup> London and New York, 1950.

<sup>40</sup> Mention might also be made of the publication of Max Black's *Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, 1949). See also I. M. Copi, "Philosophy and Language," this journal, IV (1951), 427-437.

<sup>41</sup> Oxford and New York, 1951, ed. with an introd. by A. G. N. Flew.

<sup>42</sup> In addition to Findlay's essay, this collection contains several other noteworthy contributions. Among these are P. Edwards' "Bertrand Russell's Doubts About Induction" and F. Waismann's "Verifiability."

<sup>43</sup> See Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York, 1929), pp. 95, 105-107.

wrappings,"<sup>44</sup> it takes the form of what is, in substance, Whitehead's question: how can even a static object survive the lapse of a time interval  $t - t_0$  in the face of *first* having to survive the denumerable infinity of sub-intervals  $\frac{t - t_0}{2^n}$  ( $n = \dots, 3, 2, 1$ ) ?

More specifically, we are told that

... the problem assumes its most vexing form if we allow that ordinary happenings have ultimate parts that take no time. For of such parts it seems most natural to say that none can be next to any other, and once this is said it is hard to understand how any ultimate part can ever pass away or be replaced by any other. ... Our admission seems to leave us with a world immobilized and paralyzed, in which every object and process, like the arrow of Zeno, stands still in the instant, for the simple reason that it has no way of passing on to other instants.<sup>45</sup>

With respect to solutions of this problem, Findlay first asserts negatively that it is "foolish to imagine that we can meet Zeno's puzzles by the modern theory of the continuum."<sup>46</sup> Again negatively, he shuns Whitehead's *solution* of the problem as "drastic" (although he had accepted Whitehead's *formulation* of it), for he seems unwilling to "choose to say that there is a finite number of ultimate parts in any happening, or other queerer things."<sup>47</sup> Positively, he offers a conjecture which is at once suggestive and evasive:

... we might give to all this talk of instants and of infinite divisibility a sense consistent with the obvious facts of our experience, that things happen and that phases are outlived, that the world is not immobilized, ... For the infinite happenings that must first occur before a given thing can happen, are not like ordinary happenings we can see and show, of which it would be absurd to say that an infinite number ever were completed. They are happenings of a new sort to which a meaning must be arbitrarily given. And since we have to give a meaning to these happenings, it is for us to see that they mean nothing which conflicts with our established ways of saying things. And once we strip them of pictorial vividness, we also strip them of their puzzling character.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Findlay, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50, fn. 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Idem.*

Findlay appears to be saying that there is a theory which resolves time intervals into infinitely many elements without entailing consequences dissonant "with the obvious facts of our experience." Since he does not furnish any details regarding the required theory, two possibilities of interpretation suggest themselves to us: (1) he has given us only a program and has not solved the problem he posed, (2) the required theory is already available but requires reinterpretation in the light of his admonitions. The manner in which he rejected both Whitehead's theory and the mathematical theory of motion, which is based on the linear Cantorean continuum, favors the first of these two interpretations.

Max Black's "Achilles and the Tortoise" (*Analysis*, vol. 11, No. 5 [April, 1951]) does two things: (1) it argues that the popular mathematical refutations of Zeno's paradoxes of motion are inadequate; (2) it presents a rival refutation of Zeno by denying the physical relevance of the infinities encountered in the mathematical theory of motion, and claims a complete *finitism* for the actual physical process of motion. The first part of Black's paper says in greater detail and with greater pedagogical skill what other writers have said clearly before him.<sup>51</sup> The second part is interesting in that Black couples his emphasis on the finitist character of all that Achilles physically *does* with the acceptance of the non-finitary mathematical theory of motion as "one way in which we find it useful to *describe* the physical reality."<sup>52</sup> I shall argue elsewhere that the latter part of Black's paper constitutes an attempt to eat one's cake and have it and that his finitist approach to the problem is unsatisfactory.

An essentially historical point about Zeno interpretation, concerned with showing in what sense Zeno's arguments entail a *mathematical* advance over his contemporaries, is made in Aloys Müller's "Das Problem des Wettlaufs zwischen Achill

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<sup>51</sup> See H. Weyl, *Das Kontinuum* (Berlin, 1918), p. 15 and *Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science*, *op. cit.*, p. 42; O. Hölder, *Die Mathematische Methode* (Berlin, 1924), pp. 539 and 98; A. Grünbaum, "Relativity and the Atomicity of Becoming," this journal, IV (1950), pp. 178-182.

<sup>52</sup> M. Black, "Achilles and the Tortoise," *op. cit.*, p. 101.

und der Schildkröte," which appeared in the new German *Archiv für Philosophie* (II [1948], pp. 106-111).

Earlier in this paper, I quoted from P. W. Bridgman's statement of his operationist reasons for rejecting the Cantorean concept of transfinite cardinals of different orders. In the same context, he mentions Zeno as follows:

... A somewhat similar situation occurs for me with regard to the paradoxes of Zeno. ... if I literally thought of a line as consisting of an assemblage of points and of an interval of time as the sum of moments without duration, paradox would then present itself.<sup>53</sup>

Bridgman seems to be interested here in the *metrical* aspects of Zeno's paradoxes relating to the possibility of *consistently* resolving an *extended* linear continuum into *unextended* elements. The Cantorean theory, however, succeeds admirably in achieving metrical consistency, but the concept of a super-denumerable infinity, which Bridgman would have us reject, is an essential element in making this achievement of consistency possible.

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<sup>53</sup> P. W. Bridgman, "Some Implications of Recent Points of View in Physics," *op. cit.*, p. 490.





## RECENT DISCUSSIONS OF ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

During the three years (1948-50) which have elapsed since the death of Professor Whitehead, a number of books and articles have appeared which deal with his life, personality and work. The following have been selected for consideration: *The City of Reason*: S. H. Beer (Harvard University Press, 1949); *Whitehead and the Modern World*: V. Lowe, C. Hartshorne, A. H. Johnson (The Beacon Press, 1950); *Whitehead's Theory of Experience*: E. P. Shahan (King's Crown Press, 1950); *Process and Unreality*: H. K. Wells (King's Crown Press, 1950); "Whitehead's Doctrine of Causal Efficacy," H. R. King, *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XLVI, No. 4, 1949; "The Mutual Exclusiveness of Whitehead's Actual Occasions," W. A. Christian, *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. II, No. 7, 1949; "Locke and Whitehead on Individual Entities," N. Lawrence, *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. IV, No. 2, 1950; "Whitehead's Method of Extensive Abstraction," N. Lawrence, *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 1950; "The Philosophy of Whitehead," V. Lowe, *The Antioch Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1948; "The Influence of Bergson, James and Alexander on Whitehead," V. Lowe, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. X, No. 2, 1949; "An Appreciation of Professor Whitehead," C. Malik, *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XLV, No. 21, 1948; "A. N. Whitehead's Theory of Feeling," J. K. McCreary, *The Journal of General Psychology*, Vol. 41, First Half, 1949; "A. N. Whitehead: A Pupil's Tribute" and "Whitehead's Philosophy," F. H. Page, *The Dalhousie Review*, Vol. 28, 1948; "Alfred North Whitehead, 1861-1947," P. Weiss, *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 181, No. 5, 1948.

*The City of Reason*: S. H. Beer.

It is indeed encouraging to find a Professor of Government turning to Whitehead in search of a philosophical basis for the liberal democratic way of life. This book is not written for professional philosophers, rather for students of political science and the public in general.

Unfortunately Beer is guilty of serious misunderstandings of Whitehead's metaphysics. This vitiates a promising project and mars an otherwise effective discussion of political theory. (Only two chapters are devoted directly to Whitehead.)

Beer states that modern thought is plagued by scepticism which follows from the contemporary emphasis on "relativity" and the acceptance of a fundamental discontinuity, or pluralism, in the ultimate nature of things. As long as we adhere to this point of view, rational purpose is impossible, an adequate political life cannot be achieved. For this reason, Beer is strongly opposed to all these modern tendencies and in particular to the attendant conviction that the individual should be submerged in the group.

In the philosophy of Whitehead, Beer correctly finds emphasis on the creative power of the individual. However, he involves himself in error when he begins to discuss the function of God in Whitehead's system. It is stated that God's primordial nature constitutes "One Power," "One Purpose." This refutes those who claim that there are "many powers," "many conflicting purposes." Beer believes in "another world" beyond this, an eternal present, beyond "history," a Heaven in which all souls are saved and evil is eliminated. He claims to find justification for these beliefs in Whitehead's theory of the consequent nature of God. As a matter of fact, Whitehead contends that the consequent nature of God is continually growing.<sup>1</sup> It includes only *part* of the available data provided by other actual entities.<sup>2</sup> But it does retain *both* good and evil, hence the doctrine of tragedy.<sup>3</sup> Also, God, in Whitehead's opinion, is not outside the world, rather God is one among many co-operating actual entities.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *Process and Reality* (Macmillan, New York, 1929), p. 524; *Modes of Thought* (Macmillan, New York, 1938), p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> See *Process and Reality*, pp. 134, 517, 524-5, 531.

<sup>3</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 531; *Adventures of Ideas* (Macmillan, New York, 1933), pp. 368-9; *Religion in the Making* (Macmillan, New York, 1926), p. 155.

<sup>4</sup> See *Process and Reality*, pp. 134, 521.

Further, there is a contradiction in Beer's account of actual entities. He refers, correctly, to the creative autonomy of each actual entity. He then denies this creative power by stating that past actual entities impose themselves on present actual entities and that all actual entities get their creative power from God. Here Beer is entirely incorrect.<sup>5</sup>

It seems strange to find him stating that because there is creative power and purpose in God, therefore we should exert ourselves in a purposive fashion extending our power and knowledge in a rational co-operative fashion. The peculiarity of this follows from Beer's claim that God is the "One Power," working through us. Incidentally, Whitehead's entire discussion of actual entities, "ordinary" and God, is misunderstood by Beer because of his failure to grasp the notion that in the interrelation of actual entities, there is "perishing" — "loss."<sup>6</sup> Beer's quotations to the contrary involve the fallacy of accent.

Despite his claim to be following Whitehead, Beer obviously has been influenced strongly by Emerson, Kant, Dewey and Rousseau. This perhaps explains the presence of ideas which certainly would not be accepted by Whitehead. Most prominent is the Emersonian supernaturalism noted above. There is an emphasis on "Natural Law" as an ethical standard and the claim that pluralism implies chaos. Strangely enough, in one place Beer notes that it is possible to retain both discontinuity and continuity, as Whitehead does. It is to be regretted that Beer did not make use of Whitehead's fairly extensive discussions of social and political writings found in *Science and the Modern World*, *Adventures of Ideas* and *Essays in Science and Philosophy*.

*Whitehead and the Modern World*: Lowe, Hartshorne, Johnson.

This small volume contains three papers presented at a meeting of the Western Division of The American Philosophical Association on May 8, 1948. It commemorates the life

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 38, 135, 164, 343, 436.

<sup>6</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 80, 363-4: *Adventures of Ideas*, pp. 255-6.

and work of Alfred North Whitehead. The book includes a preface by A. C. Benjamin, then president of the Association, in which he states the nature of the papers and indicates some of the main events in Whitehead's career. His status in the contemporary intellectual environment is also outlined.

Lowe's paper on "Whitehead's Philosophy of Science" is chiefly taken up with an exposition of the "method of extensive abstraction." The many important implications of this method are clearly stated. There is a valuable comparison with the "operationalistic" approach to such problems. Reference is made to the criticisms of "extensive abstraction" offered by Lenzen and de Laguna. Lowe sets his discussion in the context of general remarks in which, for example, he stresses Whitehead's outstanding ability to combine theory and "concreteness of experience." Lowe also records his personal regrets that Whitehead includes Platonic and religious elements in his metaphysics.

Hartshorne's chapter entitled "Whitehead's Metaphysics" is a very useful summary (under twelve headings) of some of the main contributions to metaphysics made by Whitehead. He characterizes him as a true rationalist (one who does not overlook alternatives); an empiricist who knows the dangers of pseudo-empiricism. Whitehead is termed a realist who escapes, effectively, from the ego-centric predicament and yet an idealist in so far as he stresses subjectivism. Here is provided an answer to Hume, the embodiment of modern logic and scientific thought within a metaphysical system, a recognition of the implications of a "cell's" relation to its environment and in general, "social relations." In brief scope, this is a very effective summary. There is, however, one controversial item. Hartshorne suggests that Whitehead regards God's consequent nature as a society of actual entities. As a matter of fact Whitehead's actual position seems to be that God is one enduring actual entity.<sup>7</sup> The consequent nature grows by taking in new content (and

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<sup>7</sup> See *Process and Reality*, pp. 134, 521, 524. It is to be noted that Whitehead does not refer to God as a society.

not passively as Hartshorne suggests).<sup>8</sup> The superject nature is providing concrete data for other actual entities. However, God, an exceptional actual entity, is not restricted to a brief duration and hence the continuity of God's "concrete" (consequent) existence does not depend on a social system.

Johnson's chapter on "Whitehead's Philosophy of Civilization" is an attempt to outline his definition of civilization, indicate how Whitehead thinks civilization may be established and strengthened and finally, show that civilization is not contrary to the nature of things. It is pointed out that, in Whitehead's opinion, civilization is characterized by truth, beauty, adventure, art and peace. Many factors impinge upon the problem of producing this state of affairs: ideas, men, economic factors, the forces of inanimate nature. There must be respect for the rights of the individual, a reliance on persuasion rather than force. These principles should be applied in all phases of life. Whitehead offers a number of specific suggestions in the fields of education, industry and international relations. Finally, it is noted that Whitehead's theory of reality emphasizes creative individuality, persuasion rather than force, and values. Hence his philosophy of civilization is part of a point of view expressed in more general terms in his theory of reality.

*Whitehead's Theory of Experience:* E. P. Shahan.

This is an effective sketch of the development of Whitehead's theory of "experience." Shahan's thesis is that Whitehead's analysis of what is experienced takes two forms. The first, expressed in his earlier writings (*The Principles of Natural Knowledge*, *The Concept of Nature*, *The Principle of Relativity*) is termed the "narrow" analysis. It is "extensive" and objective in approach. The second is set forth in his later books (from *Science and the Modern World* on). It is termed the "broad" approach. Its stress is on "process." Its basis is subjective. Shahan claims that elements of the first mode of analysis carry over into the period when the second type is

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<sup>8</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 524.

being used. This causes difficulties in the form of contradictions and awkwardness in expression.

Turning to the details of this book, it is to be noted that it provides an excellent outline of Whitehead's early discussions of event and object, and the related problems of perception and spatio-temporal relations. He suggests that the objective approach fails to do justice to non-sensory data, the complicated concepts of natural science, inference and, in general, the rich complexity of the inner life of human beings.

For the most part, Shahan's exposition of Whitehead's later position is also satisfactory. He avoids the usual pitfalls with reference to Whitehead's concepts of subjective aim (in particular the *causa sui* aspect) and creativity. He provides an interesting discussion of the relation of creativity to "the extensive continuum." He calls attention to a lack of clarity in Whitehead's theories of final cause, and the characteristics of causal efficacy and of presentational immediacy. It is suggested that even in his later works, Whitehead does not achieve an effective treatment of higher mental processes.

There are clear statements of many of the usual objections to Whitehead's theory of eternal objects, the primordial nature of God, and negative prehension.

Shahan has made good use of the available literature on Whitehead's thought. The book contains a very valuable bibliography.

In a few instances Shahan weakens his discussion by inaccuracies, which he sometimes later corrects. For example, creativity is occasionally referred to as though it were an entity. The function of God in providing data for selection by other actual entities is not always accurately stated. There is a tendency to assign too much potency to God in this matter. A more serious criticism is the fact that Shahan seems to blur Whitehead's distinction between causal efficacy and presentational immediacy. In particular he tends to disregard the vagueness, rich complexity and sense of derivation involved in causal efficacy. Also he appears to overlook the fact that when



Whitehead identifies sense data with presentational immediacy he means "clear cut" sense data, not the vague type of sense data found in causal efficacy.

There is an attempt to treat *Symbolism* and *Process and Reality* as expressing one unified point of view. This denies the fact that considerable change had taken place in the period between the two books. Shahan does not seem to appreciate the attempt, in his theory of "strain feelings," to link the extension and the process approaches. Finally, it is hardly accurate to claim that Whitehead's criterion of truth is entirely a matter of force and vivacity. Shahan himself mentions Whitehead's pragmatic criterion. In addition there are references to logical consistency and intuition. These, however, are relatively small flaws in a good discussion of one important phase of Whitehead's philosophy.

*Process and Unreality*: H. K. Wells.

This book is the vigorous expression of a familiar criticism of Whitehead, the criticism that he, the denouncer of bifurcation, is guilty of the same error himself. Wells documents his claim by extensive reference to *The Concept of Nature*, *The Principles of Natural Knowledge* and, to a lesser extent, *Process and Reality*. (He makes some use of other books.)

More specifically, Wells contends that Whitehead, the "philosopher of process," has been unable to deal effectively with process because he has enslaved himself within the confines of traditional logic which emphasizes static identity and non-contradiction. In order to do justice to process, he should have turned to the logic of Hegel which appreciates properly the dynamic identity of contradiction. Wells contends that, because of his faulty method, Whitehead's entire philosophy is permeated by an inescapable dualism which expresses itself in various incompatible opposites: event-object, process-eternal object, mental-physical, primordial nature-consequent nature. Wells claims that because of the dualistic difficulties in his early natural philosophy, Whitehead developed his later speculative philosophy in an attempt to overcome them. This involves a creation myth, the desperate expedient of a "deus ex machina."

However, the fatal dualism reappears within the divine. God has two opposing natures.

In the course of his book, Wells provides generally excellent outlines of what Whitehead says concerning events and objects. (His treatment of extensive abstraction is not entirely accurate.) However, Wells is seriously incorrect in the interpretations which he offers and the implications which he adduces from Whitehead's position. When he comes to deal with the details of Whitehead's later, speculative, philosophy he is seriously deficient both in exposition and interpretation.

Proceeding now to a more detailed discussion of this "study," it should be noted that Wells claims that in the early books Whitehead endeavors to introduce permanent objects into a situation which does not justify this arbitrary imposition at all. In doing so Whitehead is contradicting his fundamental contention that reality is process and nothing else. As a matter of fact this is not an accurate report of Whitehead's position. He contends that *both* passage and permanence are factors, equally essential, discoverable in nature.<sup>9</sup> In other words Whitehead is not trying to import entities from another world. Furthermore, he does not imply that if events become recognizable, or intelligible, because of the presence of objects in them, that therefore the passage of events is reduced to the static character of the objects. Whitehead merely reports that objects are experienced as exemplified in the process. In *The Concept of Nature* and *The Principles of Natural Knowledge* questions of reality and the related technicalities of epistemology are not under consideration.<sup>10</sup> It is true that Whitehead states that there is no internal relation between object and events. What he *means* by this statement is, (as he makes clear in later books) that there is no essential relation between *one* particular event and *one* particular object.<sup>11</sup> Rather that the

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<sup>9</sup> See *The Principles of Natural Knowledge* (University Press, Cambridge, 1925), p. 98; *The Concept of Nature* (The University Press, Cambridge, 1926), Chapters VII and VIII.

<sup>10</sup> See *The Concept of Nature*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>11</sup> See *Science and the Modern World* (Macmillan, New York, 1929), pp. 230-1.

relation between an object and an event is not exclusive of a possible relation between that object and other events. Further, in his later works, Whitehead contends that because of the function of God, all objects are components in the one world of nature, present in the actual entity, God, and hence available for the use of other actual entities.<sup>12</sup> In other words, Whitehead employs the term "internal" in a special sense which is not fully understood by Wells. Concerning this function of God (his primordial nature), Wells states that according to Whitehead events and objects are brought together by the imposition of God. Actually God does not exert force to co-ordinate discrete realms. *Each* actual entity in its self-creative process makes use of data made available by other actual entities, including God.<sup>13</sup> Objects are manifest in the creative process of any actual entity because the subjective aim of that actual entity so determines it. This is Whitehead's position. It is drastically different from the one assigned to him by Wells. Equally erroneous is Wells's pseudo-exposition that while permanence is provided by God's primordial nature, process is provided by God's consequent nature. Here again Wells overlooks the central importance which Whitehead assigns to actual entities in general.<sup>14</sup> The reputed gulf between the *two* natures of God (Wells seems to be unimpressed by the fact that Whitehead refers to *three* natures of God) is by Whitehead shown to be not a gulf, but rather two distinguishable aspects of one unified entity, not imposed to solve an artificial problem but rather an entity discoverable in experience.<sup>15</sup>

Wells claims that Hegel's method of thought is superior to that of Whitehead because Hegel recognizes the importance of contradiction, negation. As Wells expresses what he understands by Hegel's position — an emphasis on becoming and perishing — there seems no difference between this and White-

<sup>12</sup> See *Process and Reality*, pp. 48, 73, 248, 374.

<sup>13</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 38, 79, 436, 523, 532.

<sup>14</sup> See "Whitehead's Theory of Actual Entities: Defence and Criticism," *Philosophy of Science*, XII (1945), 267-68, 280.

<sup>15</sup> See *Process and Reality*, pp. 7-8, 12, 19, 524.

head's discussion of the complex development of an actual entity. Wells charges Whitehead with being a devotee of a harmony which reduces opposition to mere contrast, and yet he quotes Whitehead's list of final opposites. He also neglects Whitehead's statement that this is a *union of opposites*.<sup>16</sup>

Wells quotes Whitehead's words to support his interpretations of Whitehead's meaning but he disregards, in many instances, passages which indicate that these interpretations are inaccurate. In general, Wells seems to be the victim of a tradition which claims that Whitehead, having denounced dualism, restored the discredited idol without knowing what he was doing.

"Whitehead's Doctrine of Causal Efficacy": H. R. King.

This is a somewhat obscure and repetitious document in which it is pointed out that when Whitehead refers to "experiential togetherness" he does not necessarily imply conscious experience. Further, it is suggested that if this form of togetherness is seriously regarded as natural, the traditional problems of body-mind relation and causality are to be regarded as artificial.

"The Mutual Exclusiveness of Whitehead's Actual Occasions": W. A. Christian.

This paper is a valuable discussion of some senses in which an actual occasion may be said to exclude other actual occasions. The highly technical Whiteheadian theories of the relationships of an actual occasion to past, present and future occasions (as developed in the later books) are stated with admirable clarity. Apparent confusions in Whitehead's presentation are noted and interpreted in a sympathetic though accurate fashion. Christian's outlines and evaluations of Whitehead's positions are fully and carefully documented. The discussion of the tenuous relationships of "contemporaries" is particularly noteworthy.

The treatment of "objectification," in general, is sound. He states, correctly, that objectification is appropriation by

<sup>16</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 528-9.

the living of the dead. That is to say, the new occasion does not receive, as data, the living immediacy of a past occasion. However, Christian seems on occasion to err when he suggests that there is merely a similarity, repetition, or re-enaction of *pattern*, not a literal *transfer of content* (p. 67). Yet many of the passages he quotes from Whitehead seem to imply that there is not only re-enaction of pattern but also a literal transfer of content. The term "feeling" is applied to such content. However, this statement must be set in the context of Whitehead's theory of objectification. That is to say, feelings (data) are transferred but they are not the living immediacy of the past actual occasion. This, Christian on occasion recognizes (p. 74). In short, the difficulty seems to be that Christian does not always realize that Whitehead uses the term "feeling" in several senses. For the purposes of this discussion two senses may be noted: (1) living immediacy of subjective possession; (2) objective data, sundered from their original sources which are now "dead." To repeat, Whitehead is saying that there is a literal transfer of feeling content, but these feelings (data) must be understood in terms of the theory of objectification. In other words, the original immediacy has been lost. Thus Whitehead is not indulging in merely "vivid or poetic language," as Christian suggests.

This defect should not blind one to the general excellence of this paper.

"Locke and Whitehead on Individual Entities": N. Lawrence.

After outlining the bifurcation of nature perpetrated by Locke, Lawrence turns to Whitehead's early works (*The Principles of Natural Knowledge* and *The Concept of Nature*) and proposes to show that Whitehead is guilty of a similar philosophic *faux-pas*. Strangely enough the main body of Lawrence's discussion is an excellent exposition of how Whitehead's "percipient events" bridge the gap between percipient objects ("minds") and perceived objects. This, with the denial of the doctrine of substance, makes it possible for Whitehead to avoid Locke's bifurcation.

Whitehead frequently approaches the problem of distinguishing between events by referring to the differing objects which are exemplified therein. Lawrence indicates the serious difficulties involved in this procedure. He points out that Whitehead also attempts to explain differentiation by stressing spatio-temporal limits.

In the last few pages of his article, Lawrence calls attention to a treatment of perception in which Whitehead states that our experience does not reveal events having definite boundaries and that the mind arbitrarily assigns boundaries. Thus Whitehead contradicts himself and in this latter position is confronted by a thoroughgoing epistemological gap.

Lawrence remarks that he does not "pursue his problem" into Whitehead's later works because the matter is more clearly and simply dealt with in the earlier works.

"Whitehead's Method of Extensive Abstraction": N. Lawrence.

This article is not merely another in a long series of discussions of Whitehead's method of "Extensive Abstraction." It also offers valuable aid to the understanding of that very complex volume *Process and Reality*. It is suggested that the treatment of extensive abstraction found in Whitehead's early writings indicates at least some of the problems with which he wrestles in the later book. Hence on the basis of an adequate understanding of the problems involved, the solutions can be appreciated more fully.

As is well known, Whitehead, in *Process and Reality*, states that each actual entity possesses a mental and a physical pole. Lawrence argues, with impressive detail and documentation, that in his early writings Whitehead vacillates between a "conceptualistic" (mental) and a "realistic" (non-mental) approach. It is suggested that in *Process and Reality* an attempt is made to overcome this difficulty.

The intricacies of Whitehead's treatment of "moment," "situation," "location," "event-particle" and the other complications of the spatio-temporal analysis, which he offers in *The Concept of Nature* and *The Principles of Natural Knowl-*



edge, are dealt with in an effort to demonstrate the purported vacillation. It is an effective treatment of a difficult topic.

"The Influence of Bergson, James and Alexander on Whitehead": V. Lowe.

Lowe's conclusion is that, in all instances, the impact of these men on Whitehead was that of encouragement or sympathy rather than "indispensable influence." This thesis is worked out in considerable detail and impressive documentation in the case of Bergson. Lowe contents himself with much briefer discussions of James and Alexander. He reminds his readers that the James-Whitehead relationship had been dealt with in previous studies. The discussion of his topic is set in the general background of "wise warning" against the all too common scholarly habit of forgetting that apparent similarities may be more apparent than real and that even if the similarities are real that does not necessarily indicate influence.

Dealing carefully with contrary opinions, Lowe shows with great skill that both in method and conclusions there are striking differences between Bergson and Whitehead. Whitehead has far more respect for intellectual activities than Bergson. He is a pluralist while Bergson hovers between monism and dualism. Even when they use common terms the meanings are frequently different, for example, the terms: process, life, memory. However, Lowe does full justice to common elements: the distrust of mechanistic materialism and the general emphasis on novelty.

In his note on the relation between James and Whitehead the same pattern of treatment is followed. He shows that on the basis of available evidence the common elements: pluralism, the emphasis on freedom and transition, are not due to James' influence on Whitehead. Rather Whitehead takes this point of view because of a vast variety of influences operative from the beginning of his adult life.

It is suggested that the impact of Alexander on Whitehead was greater than that of the other men under consideration. However here again the sources of Whitehead's genius are not to be found in the writings or conversations of his contempora-

ries. Whitehead shares with Alexander a conviction of the importance of "togetherness," emotions as well as sense data, and God. Yet Alexander's pluralism is very thin and superficial in comparison with Whitehead's. They also differ unmistakably with reference to the nature of space-time. The neo-realism of Whitehead's early writings can not be traced exclusively to Alexander. A great debt of gratitude is also due to Percy Nunn.

Lowe, on the basis of private conversations with Whitehead, is able to provide supplementary data which are of considerable interest, for instance Whitehead's wish that attention be devoted not to the origins of his philosophy but rather to the critical evaluation of it.

"Whitehead's Theory of Feeling": J. K. McCreary.

Following the lead of A. H. Murray who finds in the philosophy of Whitehead material of interest to psychologists, McCreary proceeds to outline Whitehead's theory of feeling. He mentions most of the basic phases of the theory of actual entities and attempts to show relationships between this point of view and the positions of recent writers in the field of psychology, for example: James, Lewin, Holt, Bergson. This discussion of Whitehead's technical concepts indicates that McCreary is not entirely at home in this universe of discourse. He sometimes uses key terms in an erroneous fashion, for instance: subjective form, self, nexus. However, this article is an indication of the increasing appreciation of the applicability of Whitehead's concepts in specialized areas of study.

"The Philosophy of Whitehead," V. Lowe; "An Appreciation of Professor Whitehead," C. Malik; "Whitehead . . .," F. H. Page,

The three "memorial" articles by Lowe, Malik and Page, each dealing with the life, personality and work of Whitehead, are designed, apparently, for the general reader. All refer to the profound devotion which Whitehead aroused in his students. In particular the essays by Malik and Page portray his personal characteristics with insight and efficiency. The three sketches of the general meaning of Whitehead's philosophy are

very well done. Page tends to concentrate on his metaphysics. Lowe and Malik, in addition, refer to the more concrete areas of human experience. Of the two, Lowe's account is more comprehensive.

Page's contribution is open to criticism because he over-emphasizes the influence of mathematics on Whitehead's later thought.<sup>17</sup> Also he is somewhat careless in the use of the terms "creativity" and "substance." Malik tends to "play down" Whitehead's emphasis on "permanence" while doing full justice to his stress on "process."<sup>18</sup> His discussion of Whitehead's theory of ethics gives it a too relativistic and sociological interpretation, apparently overlooking the fact that there is an eternal object "Good."<sup>19</sup>

These, however, are minor criticisms. All who knew and revered Alfred North Whitehead should be deeply grateful to these men who have provided such vitally accurate portraits of one of the great and good men of this century.

Hardly any notice of Whitehead has been taken in the public press. I am glad to notice an exception. Shortly after Professor Whitehead's death, the Harvard *Crimson* carried a brief, finely phrased and moving tribute to him, written by Paul Weiss. This discerning essay was reprinted in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May 1948. The paper, which summarizes his philosophy and gives some impressions of the man, combines depth of feeling with sanity of evaluation.

The preceeding examination of recent Whitehead "literature" indicates that while "Whitehead the man" commands tremendous respect and devotion, the "philosophy of Whitehead" is still misunderstood, in varying degrees, both by its friends (with very few exceptions) and by its foes. This of course is not surprising in view of its complexity and relative obscurity. In general his earlier philosophy is more clearly understood than his later. The world of scholarship has yet to

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<sup>17</sup> See "Whitehead's Theory of Actual Entities," *op. cit.*, pp. 240-1.

<sup>18</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 267-8.

<sup>19</sup> See "Truth, Beauty and Goodness in the Philosophy of A. N. Whitehead," *Philosophy of Science*, XI (1944), 24-5.

produce an adequate comprehensive discussion of Whitehead's metaphysics — the theory of actual entities. Also there is as yet no comprehensive treatment of the more practical phases of his philosophy, his important insights and suggestions in the fields of concrete value experience, education and social relations. These are two most stimulating challenges.

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## SOME LARGE SCALE MORAL THEORIZING

The facts of man and his moral nature place a tremendous tax upon theory; this is especially the case where theory must operate within the modes that are congenial to modern thought and are largely accepted by modern moral philosophy. This contemporary intellectual framework has two characteristics that are particularly relevant in the present context: it renounces any *pluralistic* interpretation of man and the world; and it abhors the *mysterious* in the sense of that which presents itself in experience as vividly real and significant, but which eludes expression in sharp logical categories. Given these two conditions to be satisfied, the multiple character that belongs to man as a moral agent and the multiple dimensions in which moral action unfold are difficult to explain. It is for this reason, perhaps, more than any other, that modern ethical writing has been so largely critical and fragmentary.<sup>1</sup> Only recently has evidence been accumulating of a more considered and constructive approach to the moral problem. It will be interesting to examine briefly the hopes and the fulfillments of certain of these attempts at large scale moral theorizing.<sup>2</sup>

### I

Mlle. de Beauvoir devotes herself to the task of giving a systematic and explicit statement of the ethical doctrines that

<sup>1</sup> Rather similar suggestions have been advanced in two recent and highly interesting papers. One is by Brand Blanshard, "Subjectivism in Ethics," *Philosophical Quarterly*, I (1951), pp. 127-139; the other is by William K. Frankena, "Moral Philosophy at Mid-Century," *Philosophical Review*, LX (1951), pp. 44-55.

<sup>2</sup> *Pour une Morale de l'Ambiguïté*, by Simone de Beauvoir (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1947), pp. 223.

*Traité des Vertus*, by Vladimir Jankélévitch (Paris: Éditions Bordas, 1949), p. 807.

*The Forms of Value*, by A. L. Hilliard (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), pp. xvi, 343.

*Good Will and Ill Will*, by Frank C. Sharp (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. xi, 248.

are implicit in the general position of existentialism. Accepting without argument Sartre's conception of the self, she seeks to expand this into a moral theory that will enable man to understand the situation in which life places him, will encourage man to face the innumerable risks and the inevitable failures with which this situation confronts him, and will help man to live as successfully as is possible within the context of this life-situation. Considered as a whole, the book is a bewildering mixture of acumen and naiveté, of close analysis and loose theorizing. Mlle. de Beauvoir is sensitive to the nuances of man's moral experience, and where she is concerned with a phenomenological account of the felt quality of life and of the courses that life opens to us, her accounts are usually very rewarding. But she exhibits a singular blindness to theoretical difficulties, and when she attempts to explain the structure of life and to expound a system of moral values and principles, her arguments are apt to become vague and incoherent.

The range of the present work can be indicated by an abstract of the three parts into which it is somewhat loosely divided. The first is concerned with an analysis of the human situation, and of the central problem that this poses for man. The second describes in detail various tempting but fallacious solutions to this problem, and, more vaguely, the one correct solution. The third presents an account of man's obligation to his fellows, and seeks to develop a moral criterion.

The first of these sections is the least satisfactory. Some of the responsibility for this lies in the fact that Mlle. de Beauvoir is here giving a summary statement of the existentialist view of man, and the argument assumes almost as much as it explains; this is a legitimate procedure, and the difficulties that it creates can be forgiven. But the relative failure of this treatment is caused more largely by the fact that the whole analysis depends upon the concept of freedom, and this concept itself remains protean and amorphous. Freedom weaves in and out of the argument, appearing now as premise and now as conclusion, serving here as an original datum and there as the goal to be achieved, functioning both as that which makes morality possible and as that which morality makes possible. Because



freedom assumes so many guises, it continually slips through the interstices of systematic exposition, and becomes only a series of paradoxes.

Yet even here there is much that is of philosophic moment. When Mlle. de Beauvoir describes the condition of man as this is discovered to human reflection, she is acute and forceful: she presents and insists upon certain characteristics of man's condition that philosophy often explains away. The essence of man's moral position, under this diagnosis, resides in its ambiguity. The attempt to elucidate this concept metaphysically never achieves clarity beyond the familiar, but vague, distinction between *l'être* and *l'existence*: man can and must give himself a status that he does not have; he tries in vain to realize a synthesis of the *pour soi* and the *en soi*; his assertion demands his denial; the achievement of what he wants entails the obliteration of what he wanted. Ambiguity as an ontological predicate remains confused and unrealized. But the reflection of this ambiguity in life is made vivid, if not always distinct. The human situation is ambiguous at its core because man is "a sovereign and unique subject in the midst of a universe of objects" (p. 12); this holds true of every man, so while each is a subject to himself he is an object to all others. Because of this dual status, man is at once both an end and a means: so each man is continually treating other men, who are properly ends-in-themselves, as though they were means to his own ends. This is the crux of the moral dilemma when viewed from the outside, when treated as a social and political problem, and it receives extensive discussion in the latter part of the book. At this stage of the inquiry, interest centers on the situation of the individual *vis-a-vis* himself. The essence of this situation, as here described, resides in the fact that man must commit himself to his projects and purposes, yet each of these commitments is itself committed to failure. Man can never know beforehand to which of various alternative ends he should devote himself, and he can never realize the end that he chooses; yet he must assume ends and act for their attainment. This *commitment to failure* is inescapable for two reasons. First, because of the temporal factor: envisaging and projecting the

future, man intends to make this future an eventual present with a specific character; but the present glides instantaneously into the obliteration of the past; so man can only rebuild in purpose what in fact time destroys more rapidly. Failure is inevitable, secondly, because, though man creates his acts in willing them, he does not create the world in and through which he acts; the world, being itself, offers resistance to man's will, confronts him with obstacles, and frustrates the intentions it calls into existence. The human condition is infected with ambiguity because man's becoming has no destination in being.

Since this is his condition, one wonders why man does not, and should not, merely acquiesce and adopt an attitude of indifference. But existentialism refuses man this easy consolation. Being free, man cannot escape the obligations of his freedom. Since he is free to intend, to will, and to act, he must exercise this freedom by choosing the content of his intentions, his volitions, and his actions. And he must make this choice himself: there is no external authority, no absolute objective standard, no categorical rule or principle, that can indicate to man what he should choose. The choice must be strictly his own, grounded in his resources and justified by his efforts in its behalf. This is the crux of man's private or personal moral situation: he must choose, he must commit himself, with no guidance as to what he ought to choose and with no assurance that his choice is right. There are no objective values; there is no external standard of rightness; there is no justification before the event. Man creates values; he does this by committing himself; he justifies the values he has created by assuming responsibility for them.

This is a hard doctrine. It is Kantianism without even the consolation of the categorical imperative. But Mlle. de Beauvoir is driven inexorably to it because of her acceptance of man's freedom as absolute and unconditioned. If freedom is to retain the moral significance that its metaphysical status assigns to it, it cannot be qualified; but if man looks outside himself to find what he is to be and to do, his freedom is to that extent abridged. So this analysis of man culminates in an awful paradox. If man is made subservient to absolute values, he

ceases to be a free agent. But if man is isolated from absolute values, the use that he is to make of his freedom is unrestricted and unguided. Mlle. de Beauvoir recognizes that this position is unacceptable to the human spirit: it must be qualified to comfort man, and made concrete to guide him. It is to this task that she devotes the body of this book. She offers no theoretical solution of the problem, and intimates that no solution in principle is possible. What she does offer is detailed practical advice concerning the use and abuse of freedom.

This advice is first presented in the form of a pathology of the moral life. We are here given analyses of various attitudes, frequently adopted in practice, that involve a denial or misuse of freedom. At the lowest point in this scale of humanity is the *sous-homme*: the man who refuses to choose and will, who simply drifts with events, who cannot intervene in life. Next, and of most frequent occurrence, is the *homme sérieux*: this is the man who surrenders his freedom once and for all by subscribing to some external body of doctrine, who abdicates his position as a free agent by immersing himself in some religious, social, or political movement. When the serious man is disappointed in the cause he has accepted, he is apt to become a *nihilist*: he then denies all values, even his own. On a far higher level is the attitude of the *aventurier*: the essence of adventure is to commit one's self not to the end itself that is chosen, but to the struggle to attain this end. Then, when failure intervenes, it is accepted as merely an episode in the process of pursuit, and the adventurer turns to other conquests. This attitude is very close to that of *l'homme libre*, but the difference is crucial: the adventurer, concerned only with himself and his actions, ignores the effect of his choices on others, and so lacks respect for the liberty of others; the free man is dedicated to freedom itself, and so he has a constant concern for the freedom of others. This dialectic of the moral life is perceptive and illuminating, especially as regards the close relations it establishes between ethical and political considerations; it is revealing of the modern temper and situation to compare it with the famous Platonic analysis in the eighth book of the *Republic*. The good man has not himself changed

radically, despite great superficial variations; but he now seems to find his enemies, both internal and external, in very different quarters.

With the concept of the free man, the inquiry approaches its climax. Accepting the fundamental existentialist paradox that it is man's duty to be free, it is then essential to discover the conditions and the content of a free life. The answer that is here proposed runs as follows: the only proper use of freedom is that which makes more freedom possible. But it is only men who can act freely. So we must choose with a view to others. Further, we must choose that course that promotes free choice by others; we cannot help others by choosing for them, but only by extending the range within which they can choose for themselves. Finally, since any choice we make will be for some men and against others, we must choose with a regard for "*le salut du plus grand nombre*" and with a willingness to sacrifice "*les hommes d'aujourd'hui à ceux de demain*" (pp. 159, 161). Throughout this argument, one gets the sense that existentialism, accepting the Aristotelian dictum concerning the relation of ethics and politics, is searching to develop a moral doctrine that can both ground and guide political liberalism.

The strict ethic of ambiguity, resting as it does upon the paradox of freedom, is essentially an ethic of crisis. As an account of the total quality and course of life, it is an overdramatization; as a principle of action, it is too abstract to be very helpful. Hence the necessity to give it more concrete and precise expression. Mlle. de Beauvoir recognizes the danger in this; she insists that morality cannot be reduced to rules of choice, but can only enunciate a method of choosing. This is to work for the liberation of men, to act so as to enlarge the possibilities of action. It is certainly surprising to find the existentialist doctrine of man as a free creator of values transforming itself into a morality that is a blend of utilitarianism, liberalism, and eudaemonism. It does this, I think, because, failing a solid metaphysical solution of the problem of freedom, it must fall back upon a social and political solution. That is, for existentialism really to define and establish its position, it must explain freedom in terms of its intrinsic character and

conditions; to the extent that it is unable to do this, it falls back upon the device of elucidating freedom by reference to its extrinsic consequences.

## II

M. Jankélévitch's *Traité des Vertus* is considerably the most ambitious and thorough of these books; it is one of the rare contemporary works that accepts with full seriousness the facts and the implications of the moral conscience and tries to explain these on their own terms. This study can, I think, be safely placed in the general movement of existentialism; but it draws its inspiration more directly from Kierkegaard, and it is closer to this original source than to the doctrines of Sartre or Heidigger. It insists upon the *surnaturalité* of the moral element; it defines good as a manner of acting, *une façon d'agir*, rather than a mode of being; it holds that the source of moral awareness and choice lies in neither affectivity nor reason, in neither pleasure nor prudence, but in conscience and the sense of obligation; it regards man as a free agent, and finds the center of all values in the factor of intention; it maintains that duty is unlimited; it locates the origin and motive force of all goodness in the power of love. But this essential voluntarism is tempered by other strong and divergent influences: pleasure and pain as motive factors in conduct, reason as the guide of action, the ordering influence of habit, the limitations imposed on man by his physical nature; all of these and others are acknowledged. The enormous learning that is embedded in the work frequently obscures the argument that it supports; one has the sense that the work is unrealized as a whole, that it is an intricate arrangement of material insights that never achieves formal stability, just because this learning and these insights fail of synthesis.

The orientation of the study is revealed, the course of its argument anticipated, in the first sentence, where M. Jankélévitch states his conception of the central problem of all morality: the problem of discovering what to do, how to act. This is the point of departure of all real moral deliberation, so it is here that inquiry must commence. Morality comes to life in us,

values become significant for us, in those situations where we have to choose and act, and we do not know what to choose or how to act. This is the moral dilemma: "*il s'agit de faire*" and "*nous ne savons quoi*" (p. 5). To be moral agents, we must discover what to do.

By what appeal can we solve this problem? M. Jankélévitch begins by considering and rejecting the three most prominent naturalistic appeals. The first of these is hedonism. Pleasure is so apparent, and apparently so simple and elemental, that it is the most obvious candidate when we seek a guide to action. But it is a deceptive and inadequate guide: it cannot always even indicate a definite "yes" or "no" concerning the quality of the present moment; it is ambiguous with respect to the future; it cannot assign the causes that are responsible for its occurrence; it eludes pursuit; and analysis of its occasions leaves it an abstraction devoid of content. Since pleasure is not the principle that we seek, we must look beneath or beyond pleasure. Beneath, we find the life of instinct. Nature, we should suspect, has endowed her creatures with drives and impulses that direct them along the proper courses of action. In man, pleasure is the conscious symptom of these *profound designs of nature*; it is the designs themselves that we must seek out, and then accommodate ourselves to them. By studying the organization of our instincts, we can discover what nature demands of us. But this principle also fails us: for though instinct informs us that we need something, it does not tell us what this something is. The satisfaction of instinct has a content that is not instinctively determined. There remains the principle of happiness, which is the pursuit of pleasure enlarged and organized by reason. This yields a more comprehensive, subtle, and balanced course of action: it envisages the future as well as the present, it merges local and transient pleasures in a view of the creature's total interest, and it teaches us the uses of things as means to our ends. The concept of happiness as the life of reason makes good many of the deficiencies of the pleasure principle. But it is still unsatisfactory as a guide to action. It makes the self the sole focus of action; it informs us but does not obligate us; it restricts value to the consequences of our actions. This principle is conditional rather than com-



pulsive, self-centered rather than sympathetic, teleological rather than intentional. For these reasons, it is both an inaccurate description of moral choice and an inadequate guide to moral action.

Having exposed what he regards as the ultimate futility of any naturalistic interpretation of morality, M. Jankélévitch makes it his basic thesis that man's *vocation éthique* is *surnaturelle*: the possibility of a moral life, the recognition of the compulsiveness of the good and the commitment of the self to the realization of the good, depend upon an aspect of man that is quite distinct from those of his characteristics that derive from his status as a natural creature. This locus of morality is never described or explained in detail, and even the identification of it is hesitant and vacillating: it is referred to as *démiurgie morale*, as *volonté*, as *surnaturalité morale*, with little further elucidation. This entity or faculty is treated as a necessary inference from the facts of the moral life, and what is said of its substantial character is exhausted in two statements: it is *surnaturelle*; and man's character as a natural creature is an obstacle that it has to vanquish and bend to its moral purpose. The author avoids an analysis of this moral sense, as though he were anxious to stipulate its effectiveness without positing its reality.

Throughout the study, interest centers in the function, rather than the structure, of this *démiurgie*; and the account that is given of its operation in defining and controlling the course of the moral life is detailed and intricate. This account centers around five concepts: intention, duty, obligation, conscience, and love. These basic concepts are fluid, and it is impossible to state precisely either their individual content or the relations in which they stand to one another. They are modes through which the primitive and protean *surnaturalité morale* manifests itself; or, perhaps more exactly, they simply are this *surnaturalité* appearing in different guises and operating through different processes in the various moments of the moral situation.

The best way to clarify the role of these concepts in the moral life is to return to the question with which the book starts: *il s'agit de faire* and *nous ne savons quoi*. So the question

is how we can know and do what we have to do. Obviously we have to do the good. But this does not help much, for the good cannot be known before the event: the good is not, it is to be done; and it becomes, and so becomes knowable, only as we choose it in deliberation and realize it in act. So what we have to do is intend the good without knowing it; in this sense, intention is the heart of morality. It is only the intention to do good that depends entirely upon me, so it is only intention that is unconditionally good. In the act of intention we commit ourselves to the good, and become potential moral agents.

But since the good is still undetermined, this moral intention remains blind: for we are not told *what* to intend. The answer is supplied by the concept of love. Our intention must be well-meaning and benevolent; it must renounce the self and embrace others. So *our goodness* is prior to *the good*; 'good' is defined by its direction rather than by its content; it is the force of love in ourselves, the intention to promote the well-being of others, that creates good. In the act of love we become real moral agents. The *démiurgie morale* appears as intention when it leads us to recognize a responsibility beyond the natural order and to commit ourselves beyond, and even against, our interests as natural creatures. It appears as love when it induces a devotion to others. It is possible to intend the good and not do it because love does not direct us in the only path that can lead to its achievement. It is possible to love others and not benefit them because intention does not commit us to the acts that realize their good. Given both intention and love, man is an effective moral agent.

Within this framework, which defines the drive and the direction of morality, the metamorphosis of the moral sense as obligation, duty, and conscience can be treated more briefly. Obligation is a constraint that the will freely imposes upon itself, just because of its own commitment, and without either the compulsion of external values or the persuasion of internal reasons. Duty is the sense of the explicit task to which we are committed. Conscience is the sense of failure, either actual or threatened.

Such is the force that animates and directs the moral life. If this force, manifesting itself in these ways, were the only

factor in the moral life, this life would be unbearably intense and difficult: it would be a series of crises, each of which would demand our full attention, would absorb our full devotion, and would involve our total commitment. Life, to be trite, is not like this: it is less than a series of crises and more than a series of failures. It is so because of the virtues that we acquire and rely upon. Virtues, as for Aristotle, are conceived as habits: as we participate in situations that require us to intend and act, virtues function to translate intention into a definite end, and to dictate a particular course of action. Virtues are the ordering principles of the moral life: they guide us through the maze of the world by specifying the content of good, by giving intention a definite form, and by stipulating the concrete acts that will embody abstract values. By themselves virtues lack motive force, and can be sustained only by love. So in the last analysis love is the only virtue, and *the virtues* are the ways in which love expresses and concretizes itself.

### III

The contributions offered by Mr. Sharp and Mr. Hilliard are methodological rather than substantive. Each espouses a traditional position; Mr. Sharp that of utilitarianism, Mr. Hilliard that of hedonism, and neither introduces any radically novel doctrine or fresh insight. What each of these authors does present is a highly interesting consideration of the methods of moral theory and practice: they take their doctrines very much for granted, and concern themselves with the evidence on which these rest and the means by which they can be implemented.

Mr. Hilliard's book is a forthright and thorough statement of "egoistic psychological hedonism"; it elaborates the single thesis that "each organism does and can act only to the end of its own pleasure" (p. 6). The author insists that this proposition, which expresses the basic postulate of hedonism, is neither a tautology nor a definition, but a valid and meaningful inference from experience. He further insists that this proposition, since it is completely empirical in its ground and its

content, affords the foundation for a theory of value that will be a branch of experimental science.

The merit of the study lies in the explicitness and consistency with which this hypothesis is developed. The doctrine of hedonism is first stated compactly through a series of definitions, postulates, and comments. Collectively, these express an interpretation of human nature that regards it as deterministic, self-centered, and governed by the twin drives to seek the pleasant and avoid the unpleasant. Such a position leads, of course, to a strictly emotive theory of value, the chief tenets of which can be briefly stated. "Value" is defined as "affectivity occurring in the relational contexture determined by the reaction of an organism to a stimulus object." Certain important consequences follow at once from this definition: all value occurrences are of a single type, differ only quantitatively, and so are commensurable; value is necessarily relative to the individual organism that is regarded as the focus of the affective situation, so in any case involving more than one organism there can be several alternatives each of which is the *most valuable*; the objectivity of value consists solely in the fact that *type organisms* usually experience affectivity in a uniform way in transactions with *type objects*; finally, it is *affectivities* alone that are values, and things have value only as means to affectivity.

Posed in these terms, the problem with which life confronts man is that of actualizing as much positive affectivity as he can. Mr. Hilliard accepts the correctness and the adequacy of this view of life, and in developing it he makes his most interesting contribution: this consists of an extraordinarily detailed analysis of the different ways in which organisms enter into affective relations with things. This analysis is worked out with such minuteness as to amount to a methodology for the pursuit of pleasure, and it can be summarized only roughly. The value, i.e., the affectivity, that an organism may realize from a thing is always and necessarily qualified by four essential types of attributes; put differently, every occurrence of value exhibits one and only one predicate from each of four sets of predicates, where these sets are equivalent to categories. Value may be either direct or indirect. Value may be either actual or

potential. Value may be positive, indifferent, or negative. Value may be terminal or instrumental.

Since every value situation is characterized by one predicate from each of these categories, the realm of value is exhaustively described by the permutations that these predicates permit. There are thus twenty-four modes in which value occurs, ranging, along a scale compounded of availability and desirability, from actual, direct, positive, terminal value to potential, indirect, negative, instrumental value. Each of these modes of value is analyzed in detail, largely through a symbolic apparatus, and these analyses constitute the most original and instructive part of the work. Mr. Hilliard here does much to clarify the various and often conflicting affective possibilities that things offer us, the relations and conditions that surround different value situations, and the complex ways in which we must treat things if we are to realize from them the values we seek. In short, we are here given a quite subtle methodology for analyzing the value-predicates of things and for planning our value-transactions.

From this point the argument consists in deriving all of the usual value predicates from this primitive hedonic matrix: ought, good, right, obligation, justice, happiness, and other moral concepts are all defined in terms of the original postulates. This hedonic account of the moral life, familiar in essence, is developed with admirable rigor; Mr. Hilliard holds his convictions both courageously and consistently. Believing that pleasure is the sole true end in life, and that all men do in fact pursue it exclusively, his concern is to elaborate the methods and processes that are its most effective instruments. Because pleasure does loom quite large on the horizon of human purposes, this systematic guide is an important contribution. But this account of life, despite its thoroughness and coherence, leaves one with a sense of its incompleteness. The reason for this lies in the fact that all *moral* considerations are here reduced to questions of *prudence*. Mr. Hilliard accepts this, and argues that the reduction is only apparent. But one still feels the objection that man's moral life is not adequately explained when it is transformed into the application of a hedonic and prudential calculus.

## IV

The position advanced by Mr. Sharp is that of universalistic utilitarianism. He holds that it is man's duty to bring into existence the greatest possible amount of good: the common recognition of this principle supplies the ultimate standard of all moral judgments, just as its acceptance is the basis of all moral action. To the definition and defense of this position Mr. Sharp brings little that is new; and his arguments as here presented are frequently inconclusive, since the book was left incomplete at his death and he evidently intended to do much toward clarifying and strengthening the line of his argument.

But what is here, fragmentary though it be in many respects, contains a forceful statement of an important methodological idea: the insistence that moral inquiry must consider and take seriously the actually intended content of the ordinary moral judgments of ordinary people. For a long while now, moral philosophy has concentrated upon the task of semantic analysis: we have been endlessly reminded of what, logically considered, moral judgment must assert and cannot assert, of the emotive factors that influence such judgments, of the rationalizations they often contain, of their limited empirical verifiability, and of their lack of cognitive content. In sum we have been so bemused by theories of meaning that we have lost sight of what men do in fact mean.

Mr. Sharp's strong revolt against this tendency is the dominating element in this book. He insists that if ethics is to recover its normative and practical functions it must reestablish healthy contact with common sense. The fundamental meaning of moral predicates is what men intend to say by them: they are descriptive terms by which men attribute certain characteristics to the subjects they apply to. Certainly moral judgments embody the broad sentiments of approval and disapproval, which can be specified into numerous attitudes. But equally certainly these sentiments are secondary: acts and characters are approved and disapproved not simply as such, but because of the content and quality men find in them. When men call something good or bad they intend to describe, to



say something definite about, this thing, not about their attitude to the thing. And so with all moral predicates, such as just, honest, generous, temperate, kind, and so forth: these are intended to express distinctions in human character and behavior, not distinctions in the quality of our attitude.

Such is the thesis that primarily motivates this work. The basic data of ethics are the meanings that men intend to express in moral judgments: the evidence as to what "good" and "right" *mean* can only be found by an appeal to common sense. These meanings, once so found, will then need to be examined, refined, and categorized; pervasive emotional factors and personal idiosyncrasies must be detected; the presence of dogmatic and unacknowledged standards must be made explicit. But all of this is secondary, and should wait upon the discovery of what men actually do intend to say by their moral predications. We have relied for too long upon logical and linguistic analysis of the possible range and the necessary limits of moral judgment. We must now ask what qualities in acts and characters lead men to call them right and wrong.

As I have said, the execution of this program is fragmentary. The method employed by Mr. Sharp was starkly empirical: he asked large numbers of students what decisions they regarded as right in certain standard moral situations. Then he asked for the reasons for these judgments: that is, for the conditions that made a decision right. Then he varied these situations in numerous ways, so as to see in what manner these conditions must change, and how much, before they elicited a different judgment. The evidence gathered by this inquiry, as interpreted by Mr. Sharp, disclosed two controlling factors in moral judgments: such judgments are always teleological and utilitarian. This is to say that "good" ("right," "just," etc.) is predicated of a person or action by reference to the results it produces, and these results are themselves evaluated in terms of the happiness or well-being of all concerned.

The method here employed has obvious deficiencies: the group examined is not large enough nor sufficiently representative; the personality of the investigator looms too large in the interpretation of the data; and, most important I think, such

inquiry catches the moral conscience only in its most retrospective and critical moment. Mr. Sharp was aware of these dangers, the first two particularly, the last only with major reservations, since throughout he regards the moral process as highly reflective and detached; and he was working to minimize them. Even as it stands, his major thesis retains its importance in marking a return to the common moral conscience and to the actual intentions and meanings of men's moral judgments.

## V

As I have indicated earlier, there is a clear division between such works as those of Hilliard and Sharp on the one hand and such as those of de Beauvoir and Jankélévitch on the other. Theories of the first type tend toward a rather closed and simplistic interpretation of man and morality: they seek to isolate certain elements that constitute the essence of human nature and behavior, and then to derive all else from these. The two crucial steps in the development of any such theory are, first, the identification of these essential features, and, second, the systematic expansion of them into a detailed body of doctrine. Thus, it is natural that methodological issues should figure so prominently in the argument of these theories: for their controlling problems are those of isolating their basic principles from all the data available and then of applying these principles to the normative and behavioral questions that life raises for man. The chief merit in the studies of Mr. Sharp and Mr. Hilliard lies in the light that they have cast, respectively, on these problems of the empirical discovery and the practical application of moral principles.

Theories of the second type reach toward a more inclusive and composite understanding of man and morality: they insist upon all of the ideals, motives, and capacities that are revealed by experience as operative in the moral process, and they are concerned to establish a conception of man that can contain these as real elements. Such theories culminate in issues that are metaphysical rather than logical; and these issues themselves all come to a climax in the problem of man's freedom

and creativity. Both the quality of moral choice as directly experienced, and the content of the moral imperatives that we advocate, clearly entail that only those actions that are freely engaged are truly good. But even as we anchor ourselves to this truth, we recognize that what is *freely* done must yet conform to certain standards and principles. How can both of these conditions be simultaneously satisfied? If particular acts are dominated by a general imperative, they are extrinsically determined and mechanically performed; if particular acts are independently initiated, they are arbitrary and isolated. In neither case are the acts, or the persons who inaugurate them, free. The problem of freedom is to define a character that creates out of its subjective resources acts that are appropriate to the objective order.

The present studies, I think, leave this problem still unsolved. The reason for this failure can be readily identified: they have stipulated freedom rather than explained it. Their entire account of morality hinges upon the commitment and the creativity that freedom alone can make meaningful: so it is freedom that conditions morality as a whole. But, in the accounts they present, freedom is itself unconditioned: there is no objective source that defines beforehand the ideal content of freedom, and to which man is responsible for the use he makes of his freedom. This means, as has been remarked earlier, that freedom can have no content save its own consequences. And this involves the strange conclusion that a metaphysical concept, which is stipulated to ground morality, can be defined only in economic, social, or political terms.

But, despite this unsatisfactory denouement, one can be grateful that the difficulties and the implications of freedom have been openly faced. It has been the habit of too much recent ethical thought to dismiss as substantially irrelevant data and problems that have merely been found methodologically inconvenient. However permissible at certain stages of scientific inquiry, this must always be a dangerous criterion for philosophy; and it has lately been used on a scale and in a manner that are vicious. So it is an encouraging sign for moral

philosophy to have the problem of freedom brought again to the center of the intellectual stage.

Even when thus brought into focus, its disposition is not going to be simple. The kind of naturalism that is most congenial to the modern temper embraces man so firmly in a web of causation that it leaves him no room in which to be free. And a non-naturalism, a naturalism simply renounced but not repaired, disrupts so utterly the bonds of man with the world that it offers his freedom no scale to which it can grip and no medium in which to make itself effective. For freedom needs limit as well as scope. The type-idea of causation that now dominates thought is too rigid in its operation to give freedom scope; and it is too random in its non-operation to give freedom limit. Man as a locus of force and intention is readily conceivable in this framework. But more is required: this force and intention must be given a content, must be held to a course, that is neither arbitrary nor accidental.

The general terms on which a solution of this problem would be possible are not difficult to define: this would entail the development of some naturalistic, or humanistic, equivalents of the theological concepts of Grace, Guidance, and Vocation. Or, stating the matter rather in cosmological terms, it would entail the reintroduction into the idea of nature of the concepts of *anima* and *nisus* to supplement the dominant concepts of *vis* and *causa*. The detailed working out of this solution is quite another matter. But at least it seems clear that man's actions can be moral only under the condition that they are neither necessary nor erratic. The only human mediation between these amoral extremes lies in the capacity for commitment and devotion, through which man, first recognizing an obligation to a certain range of what is abstractly and generally possible, then enriches the actual by creating what is concretely and particularly valuable.

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## THE NEW PHILOSOPHICAL CLIMATE IN ITALY

There is hardly any doubt that since the outbreak of the Second World War the Italian philosophical climate has changed considerably in orientation and direction. To be more historically correct, the shift from a rather secure to a problematic sense of life began to appear in that troubled country after the First World War. For the evidence, consult the Preface to Adriano Tilgher's *Antologia dei filosofi italiani del dopoguerra*.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, this change of vision, reflecting as it does the crisis of the contemporary European mind, did not actually reach its climax until World War II or, in other words, not until the advent of existentialism as a *general movement*. For, as far as Italy herself is concerned, the philosophers who continued to dominate her intellectual scene between the two wars were the absolute idealists Benedetto Croce and the late Giovanni Gentile. This, ironically enough, was the case despite the fact that their neo-Hegelian faith in the inevitability of progress was, like its positivistic counterpart, typical of nineteenth-century romanticism, and thus a reflection of a pre-war mentality.

A quick way of spotting the new intellectual climate in Italy is via a comparison of a survey article on contemporary Italian philosophy, "Orientamenti della Filosofia Contemporanea in Italia,"<sup>2</sup> published by Francesco Orestano practically on the eve of the last war, with a very recent volume of essays entitled *La mia prospettiva filosofica*.<sup>3</sup> The latter contains a dozen *Confessiones Fidei* (autobiographical essays, originally public lectures delivered and discussed at the University of Padua from December 1949 to April 1950), ten of which are written by present-day Italian thinkers, the other two being by Jules Chaix-Ruy and Louis Lavelle of France.

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<sup>1</sup> Modena: Guanda, 1937. For my review of Tilgher's *Anthology*, see *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXIV (1937), pp. 495-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Sophia*, VI, No. 4 (October-December 1938), pp. 425-73.

<sup>3</sup> Padua: Editoria Liviana, 1950.

The 1938 article by a leader of the New Realism in Italy opens with the flat statement that the fundamental problem of contemporary philosophy in Italy as elsewhere is the "problem of reality." However, Orestano formulates the problem in *epistemological* terms, as follows: Does a real world exist independently of human knowledge? To this question, of course, contemporary Italian philosophers have given numerous answers, but all of them are reducible, according to the author, to three primary types, namely, idealism, phenomenism, and realism. Given these three competing theories, which constitute the principal tendencies of contemporary Italian philosophy until the last decade or so, it is easy to infer that the big battle over epistemology prevailing in Italian philosophical discussions at the time was triangular in character — idealism, phenomenism, realism — each one fighting the other two.<sup>4</sup> As to which school finally won out in Italy, the very call for a revision of idealism by the most vigorous disciples of Croce and Gentile (e.g., Guido de Ruggiero, Ugo Spirito, Guido Calogero) helped the realist groups consolidate their strength. But even so, the old realists and the new were successful only in the sense that they managed to take the speck out of the epistemological eye, thus making it possible to approach the "problem of reality" directly in *metaphysical* terms.

In contrast to Orestano's 1938 article, which is a sort of "Who's Who in Contemporary Italian Philosophy" from a neo-realistic standpoint, the 1950 volume of philosophical autobiographies is, with one possible exception, conspicuous by the absence in it of discussion of the epistemological problem. The exception is perhaps the last essay by Erminio Troilo (born 1874) in defense of "absolute Realism." However, interestingly enough, even this member of the previous Italian generation now at least insists on describing his point of view as a philosophy of values — an *Eticismo assoluto*, to be exact — rather than a mere theory of epistemology. In any case, all the other

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<sup>4</sup> For the analogy with the epistemological debates in this country after 1910, cf. W. P. Montague, "The Story of American Realism," *Philosophy*, XII (1937), pp. 140-61. Orestano, by the way, uses the term "phenomenalism" for Montague's equivalent, "pragmatism."



essays in *La mia prospettiva filosofica* are definitely addressed to the "problem of reality" in the *metaphysical* sense: What is the nature of things and where does man fit in the scheme entire?

Instead of the major antimony of epistemology — subjectivism versus objectivism — over which contemporary Italian philosophers prior to World War II either took sides, tried to reach some compromise solution, or turned sceptical, a reading of the symposium volume reveals that the current polemic among philosophical circles in Italy is essentially between the existentialists and the Christian spiritualists. To be sure, in addition to a pro-Marxist essay by Antonio Banfi defending a position called "critical rationalism," there is a third school of thought represented in the volume — the neo-scholastic (Gustavo Bontadini, Umberto Padovani) — which accuses the existentialist group of nihilism and the neo-spiritualist group of anti-intellectualism. But, inasmuch as Professor Padovani himself admits elsewhere that the opposition between "classical metaphysics" and the "new spiritualism" is no more than a "friendly duel,"<sup>5</sup> we may conclude that the real dispute raging today in Italy is between the Christian spiritualists (Felice Battaglia, E. Paolo Lamanna, Michele F. Sciacca, Luigi Stefanini) and the existentialists (Nicola Abbagnano, Enrico Opocher). One important school is not represented, to wit, the neo-positivist. Had a man like Annibale Pastore, who not so long ago wrote a book<sup>6</sup> against existentialism from a neo-relativist standpoint, been invited to participate in the lecture series at the University of Padua, *La mia prospettiva filosofica* would have provided a fairly complete panorama of the most recent philosophical trends in Italy.

Finally, of the two major groups in conflict at the moment, the Christian spiritualists and the existentialists, it should be no surprise to hear that the former are in possession of the

<sup>5</sup> "Nuovo Spiritualismo e Metafisica Classica," *Giornale di Metafisica*, VI, No. 1 (January-February 1951), p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> *La volontà dell'assurdo. Storia e crisi dell'esistenzialismo*. Milano: Edizioni Giovanni Bolla, 1948. For my review of this book, see *Journal of Philosophy*, XLVII (1950), pp. 448-49.

field, especially if one bears in mind the "cold war" with communism and its materialistic principles going on in a Catholic country like Italy today. Nicola Abbagnano of the University of Turin, the most articulate representative of Italian existentialism, has explicitly stated that "the majority of the writings on philosophy that are now being published in Italy express some form of spiritualism."<sup>7</sup> Yet, this fact notwithstanding, it is the militant group of existentialists who are primarily responsible for the philosophical expression of the new climate of opinion in Italy. This new climate, of course, is itself the result of the hard lesson that a growing number of Italians have learned, particularly since the bondage of Fascism — that there is no automatic guarantee to human destiny either in this world or the next, as the spiritualists old and new like to affirm. I believe that the kind of "positive existentialism" being developed by Nicola Abbagnano and his group will eventually dominate the Italian philosophical climate.<sup>8</sup> For such existentialism is not only the philosophy that makes intelligible the precariousness of human existence; it is also the point of view that justifies the possibilities of *homo viator*.

PATRICK ROMANELL

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<sup>7</sup> "Philosophical Survey: Philosophy in Italy," *Philosophy*, XXVI (1951), p. 146.

<sup>8</sup> For an introduction to Italian existentialism, see my review of Abbagnano's *Introduzione all'esistenzialismo* (2nd. ed., Torino: Taylor Editore, 1947) and *Filosofia religione scienza* (Torino: Taylor Editore, 1947), *Philosophical Review*, LVIII (1949), pp. 377-80; also A. Robert Caponigri, "Italian Philosophy, 1943-50," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XI (1951), pp. 504-9.



### **Announcements**

The "Inter-American Federation of Philosophy" was founded at the Third Inter-American Congress of Philosophy, held in Mexico City in January 1950. Delegates from Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, and the U.S.A. are members of the Drafting Committee. Philosophical societies and institutions offering a degree in philosophy can become members. The American Philosophical Association, The Metaphysical Society of America, The International Phenomenological Society and many American colleges and universities are already members. Applications for membership may be sent to Cornelius Krusé (Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.) or to Risieri Frondizi (University of Puerto Rico, Rio Pedras, Puerto Rico). The Federation will organize the Fourth Inter-American Congress of Philosophy, to be held in Havana, Cuba, in January 1953.

Lewis E. Hahn (Washington University, St. Louis 5, Missouri) has succeeded Lewis W. Beck as chairman of the Committee on Information Service (Vacancies and Available Personnel) of the American Philosophical Association.

Fr. John Courtney Murray of Woodstock College has been appointed Professor of Philosophy at Yale University for 1951-52.

Eliseo Vivas, formerly of Ohio State University, has been appointed John Evans Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy at Northwestern University.

The next meeting of the Metaphysical Society of America will take place on March 22d, 1952 at Yale University. The tentative program includes a presidential address by Paul Weiss and papers by Haskell C. Curry, Isabel Stearns, John Wild and Mortimer Adler. Those interested in joining the society may communicate with the secretary, Professor Ellen Haring, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass. The annual membership fee is \$1.00.

The Mahlon Powell Lectures in Indiana University were given on July 24th and 26th, 1951, by Professor Philip Wheelwright of Dartmouth University, who spoke on "The Poetic Symbol" and "The Tragic Pattern." The 1951-2 lectures will be delivered during the fall term by Ronald B. Levinson of

the University of Maine, and during the spring term by Richard McKeon of the University of Chicago.

The new officers of the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association for 1951-52: Richard P. McKeon, President; Philip B. Rice, Vice-President; William H. Hay, Secretary-Treasurer; Everett W. Hall, Van Meter Ames, Bertram Morris, additional members of the Executive Committee.

## Books Received

(Listing does not preclude a subsequent review)

*Actas Del Primer Congreso Nacional de Filosofía.* Argentina: Universidad Nacional de Cuyo. 3 vols., 2197 pp.

E. L. Allen: *A Guide to the Thought of Karl Barth*, 45 pp.; *A Guide to the Thought of Nicholas Berdyaev*, 43 pp.; *A Guide to the Thought of Emil Brunner*, 46 pp.; *A Guide to the Thought of Karl Jaspers*, 45 pp.; *A Guide to the Thought of Jacques Maritain*, 45 pp.; *A Guide to the Thought of Reinhold Niebuhr*, 45 pp. New York: Philosophical Library, 1951.

J. A. C. Fagginer Auer and Julian Hartt: *Humanism versus Theism.* Antioch: The Antioch Press, 1951. 153 pp. \$2.50.

*Later Greek Religion.* Edited by Edwyn Robert Bevan. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950. xl + 234 pp. \$3.00.

Harold F. Blum: *Time's Arrow and Evolution.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951. 222 pp. \$4.00.

I. M. Bochenski: *Der Sowjetrussische Dialektische Materialismus.* Berne: A. Francke. 213 pp.

Edgar Sheffield Brightman: *An Introduction to Philosophy* (Revised). New York: Henry Holt, 1951. 349 pp. \$3.60.

Walter Burleigh: *De Puritate Artis Logicae.* Edited by Philotheus Boehner. St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1951 (Franciscan Institute Publications). 115 pp. \$1.50.

*Greek Religious Thought.* Edited by Francis MacDonald Cornford. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950. xxxv + 252 pp. \$3.00.

Rolf Ekman: *Vilhelm Ekelund och Nietzsche.* (With English summary.) Lund, Sweden: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1951. 144 pp.

Alfred B. Glathe: *Hume's Theory of the Passions and of Morals.* (University of California Publications in Philosophy, vol. 24.) Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950. 175 pp. \$2.50.

*Goethe on Human Creativeness and Other Goethe Essays.* Edited by Rolf King. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1951. 252 pp. \$5.00.

Jean Guittton: *Essay on Human Love.* New York: Philosophical Library, 1951. 243 pp. \$4.50.

*Anteile: Martin Heidegger, zum 60. Geburtstag.* Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1950. 284 pp. 14.50 marks.

*Structure and Meaning: Essays in honor of Henry M. Sheffer.* Edited by Paul Henle, Horace Kallen, Susanne K. Langer. New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1951. 306 pp. \$4.50.

Paul Henry: *Les Manuscrits des Ennéades.* Museum Lessianum, 1948. 351 pp.

Ernst Hoffmann: *Platon.* Zurich: Artemis-Verlag, 1950. 223 pp.

Daniel Ingalls: *Materials for the Study of Navya-Nyaya Logic.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950, \$6.00.

George P. Klubertanz: *The Philosophy of Human Nature.* Saint Louis: The Modern Schoolman, 1951. 193 pp. \$3.00.

*An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature.* Compiled by R. A. Kocourek. St. Paul: North Central Publishing Co., 1948. 176 pp.

Geneviève Lewis: *Le Problème de l'Inconscient et le Cartésianisme*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950. 302 pp.

Andries H. D. Mac Leod: *Over de verhouding van de speciale relativiteitstheorie tot de Newtoniaansche voorstellingen van ruimte en tijd*. The Hague: Uitgave Drukkerij "Humanitas," 1950. 37 pp.

Jacques Maritain: *Philosophy of Nature* (with "Maritain's Philosophy of the Sciences" by Yves R. Simon). New York: Philosophical Library, 1951. 198 pp. \$3.00.

F. Mayer: *A History of American Thought*. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1951. 399 pp. \$4.00.

Richard von Mises: *Positivism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951. 404 pp. \$6.00.

H. Richard Niebuhr: *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1951. 259 pp. \$3.50.

H. J. Paton: *Kant's Metaphysic of Experience*. Reprint. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951. 2 vols., 585 + 510 pp.

Plotini, *Opera*, vol. I. Edited by Paul Henry and Hans Rudolf Schwyzer. Bruges: Desclee De Brouwer et Cie, 1951.

Plotino, *Enneadi*. With an introduction by V. Cilento. Bari, Italy: Giuseppe Laterza & Figli, 1947. 4 vols.; vol. I, 1000 lire; vol. II, 1800 lire; vol. III, 5200 lire; vol. IV, 5200 lire.

*Pouvoir de l'Esprit sur le Réel: Les Deuxièmes Entretiens de Zurich sur l'Idée de Dialectique*. Reprinted from *Dialectica*, No. 6. Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Editions du Griffon, 1948. 225 pp.

*Greek Ethical Thought*. Edited by Hilda Diana Oakeley. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950. xlii + 226 pp. \$3.00.

Robert P. Prentice: *The Psychology of Love According to St. Bonaventure*. St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1951 (Franciscan Institute Publications). 136 pp. \$2.00.

Hans Reiner: *Pflicht und Neigung*. Meisenheim/Glan: Westkulturverlag Anton Hain, 1951. 316 pp.

*Royce's Logical Essays*. Edited by D. S. Robinson. Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1951. 447 pp. \$5.00.

Aristotle's *Politics*, Bks. I-II. Translated into Hebrew by Leon Roth. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press of The Hebrew University, 1950. 110 pp.

Leon Roth: *A Guide to the Study of Modern Philosophy*. Second edition. Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1950. 130 pp.

Edmund Joseph Ryan: *The Role of the Sensus Communis in the Psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Carthage, Ohio: The Messenger Press.

Michèle-F. Sciacca: *L'Existence de Dieu*. Translated by Régis Jolivet. Paris: Aubier, Editions Montaigne, 1951. 219 pp.

F. Harold Smith: *The Buddhist Way of Life*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1951 (Hutchinson's University Library). 189 pp. \$2.00.

Tran-Duc-Thao: *Phénoménologie et Matérialisme Dialectique*. Paris: Editions Minh-Tan, 1951. 368 pp. 650 fr.

Gonzague Truc: *Histoire de la Philosophie*. Paris: Editions Fischbacher, 1950. 396 pp.

Juan Adolfo Vazquez: *Ensayos Metafisicos*. Tucuman, Argentina: Universidad Nacional de Tucuman, 1951. 101 pp. 8 pesos.

Alan W. Watts: *The Wisdom of Insecurity*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1951. 152 pp. \$2.75.

C. H. Whiteley: *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1951. 174 pp. \$2.50.



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